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physical environment. To follow the story of village life in Greece as portrayed in this book, one must be able to go imaginatively from one part of Greece to another, since every experience described will be related to the place where it occurred.

Macedonia, linked historically with Alexander the Great and the missionary activities of St. Paul, is a part of the administrative division of Northern Greece. Its northern mountain barrier separates it from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, each of which has adjoining territory which it too calls Macedonia. The Greeks believe that no area has been more bled over than Macedonia, where Greek and Slav meet.

Thrace, to the east, is also in Northern Greece and is the one area where the Turkish minority still live. Like Macedonia, it is famous for the Oriental kind of tobacco grown there.

Epirus, the northwestern province, is a mountainous land of great beauty and stormy traditions. It borders Albania.

Thessaly, south of Macedonia, boasts Mount Olympus and fertile plains which produce a fifth of the country's wheat.

Central Greece, stretching from the Ionian to the Aegean Seas, holds many tourist attractions such as Thebes, Delphi, and Athens. It also includes the slender island of Euboea along its eastern flank.

The Peloponnesos, separated from the rest of mainland Greece by the Corinth Canal, is an archaeologist's paradise. It is important agriculturally as well as being intimately connected with Greece's liberation from Turkey in 1829.

In addition to these regions on the mainland there are five island groupings in the Greek kingdom:

The Aegean Islands hug the coast of Turkey. Lesbos is the largest, Chios perhaps the best known.

The Dodecanese Islands, to the southeast of the mainland, came under Greek control after World War II with the defeat of the Italians. Rhodes, the chief island, is one of the major tourist attractions of the Eastern Mediterranean.

The Cyclades Islands are also to the southeast of, but nearer to, mainland Greece. Tinos, one of these islands, is the site of a miracle-working shrine visited by thousands of visitors every year on the Day of the Assumption.

Crete stands alone. Its civilization predates that of the mainland. Because of its better soil, more of its people are interested in farming than in fishing or shipping.

The Ionian Islands, on the west coast of Greece, were the hardest hit in the devastating earthquakes of August 1953. They include the beautiful island of Corfu, which was not damaged, as well as Ithaca, home of Odysseus.

These regions, particularly those of the mainland, will be more than names on the map as one becomes familiar with the peasants who dwell in them and with many of the natural features associated with the mountains, the plains, and the sea.

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horsefly, he will put it in his wallet for good luck. Or if he is returning from the field and sees two crows quarreling while flying high over a house, he will be reminded of the belief that either the husband or the wife in that house will die soon. If he sees a crow pass in front of him from right to left, he will consider it a good omen; but if from left to right, he will expect bad luck. Should a rabbit or snake be in the path ahead, the peasant knows he must walk on in a straight line; should the road turn to the right or left, then the individual had better return home and start the journey the following day.

A spider walking on you will bring good luck, but if you come upon two snakes fighting and eating each other, a close relation of yours will die. Should you be a shepherd in the Vardousia Mountains of Central Greece, you would probably believe that the wild goats which graze in herds are guarded by the devil and that is why one can hear them make a whistling noise. Furthermore, these wild goats have the same notches cut in their ears as the tame ones kept by the shepherds, which to these mountaineers is proof positive that the devil must be the one who puts the markings there.

Seeing some insect or animal may bring to mind a story learned when a child. The bee, for instance, was once as white as cotton. When Adam and Eve met the devil in the Garden of Eden, it was the bee that saw them first and flew immediately to tell God the news. The devil, who was then holding a burning torch in his hand, ran and tried to catch the bee to keep her from her mission. He could not reach her, but as she was nearing God the devil from afar threw the flaming torch at her. The fire singed her so that she became black. God, who saw all of this, ordered the human beings to burn in the churches only the candles made from beeswax since the bee had proven to be the purest creature of all. I am often asked if these folk beliefs (cited here and in later sections of this book) are widely held or are only the relic in the mind of some aged person. It is safe to say that almost all of them are very much alive at the conversational level. People are aware of them, talk about them. Obviously, many act on them, while others do not. But they are a part of the general atmosphere, as is the belief common in America that a person should not walk under a ladder.

Such beliefs, stories, and personal experiences with many kinds of plants and animals reinforce the rural Greek's sense of intimacy with nature, which develops because of his constant exposure to the elements in the course of his daily life. The Greek peasant, like many farmers elsewhere, moves through a living landscape with which he communicates.

The same holds true for his view of the cosmos and the movement of the heavenly bodies.[1] One of the simplest and clearest descriptions of the latter is taken from an account of a village prepared by a singing master in

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342 "Are most of the houses in this village like this one?"

"Yes, only the priest and the teacher have two rooms in their homes, but people here are beginning to think about building bigger houses."

"How do you go about building a house such as this?"

[463] [465] "Oh, we get all the materials together and then call one of the builders who lives here in the village. It may take us quite a while to collect the material, depending upon the prices we get paid for our crops. We have to pay the master builder fifty drachmas a day; it usually takes him about fifteen days, since members of the family help him. We need him because he knows best how to place the stone in the walls so they will be firm."

The woman showed little interest in the actual details of construction, but quickly passed to the ceremonies connected with a new house. She [825] pointed out that when the cornerstone was laid the family and relatives [788] came together, cut the throat of a cock, and let the blood spill on the four corners of the house, selecting the eastern corner first. Just prior to this ceremony, money was thrown out to the workers. Customs vary, as we [778] discovered, as to just what was buried in the cornerstone, but in this Peloponnesian village the family buried earth from a sacred place near the village where they had found a treasured ikon; they also included a small wooden cross and an ikon of the Holy Virgin. If the house is built as a dowry for the daughter, then some of her personal possessions such as a [574] dress or a shoe are also included in the cornerstone. Usually a big dinner of roast lamb follows the laying of the cornerstone.

A second ceremony occurs when the topmost beam of the house is in place. The roof has not yet been laid, but this is the time for the family to bring presents to the workmen, who upon receiving a gift call out the [793] name of the donor and wish him many years and a happy life. Later on, [788] when the house is finished, the priest is called. He must be the first person [777] to enter, after which he blesses the house and departs. Thereupon, for good luck, a young boy must be the first to step in.

Now the furniture can be installed and the family can settle down. The [352] dowry chests, containing valuables saved up for the unmarried daughter, [583] will be placed along a wall and the dowry blankets piled on top. "And unmarried girls must never sit on this chest or they will never get married," declared our informant.

[352] [353] Other furniture includes a small table along the wall over which is hung a large mirror. The family photographs are stuck into the edges of the mirror frame. Pictures also decorate the walls, as do pots and pans and other cooking utensils. Two or three chairs complete the roll call of furniture.

351 In other visits to village homes our attention was directed more to the [513] court than to the interior. The weather would be warm and balmy and the vines in leaf. The family had in reality moved out of doors for the season,

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844 difficult. More and more, expectant mothers are going to the provincial
[178] hospitals, but even there a family atmosphere seems to reign because family
[743] members are welcome in the patient's room. In rural Greece, as elsewhere, there are many measures which can be taken supposedly to ease the agony
[755] of childbirth. They vary from the practice in the village of Derikovo in Central Greece, where some of the women advise the one in labor to drink a glass of water into which the tail of her eldest brother's coat has been dipped, to the practice in Southern Greece of drinking water from a glass where a budding flower was placed to the accompaniment of the reading of gospel passages. When the flower has opened, the water will supposedly ease the labor pains.

846 The Greeks have a special word for the mother of a newborn infant — *lecho* — and give her solicitous treatment. The husband may insist that she observe the traditional eight days of staying in bed, although if there is much work to be done around the farm, she may in turn insist upon resuming various tasks as soon as she feels able. The other women of the household, or the neighbors, see to it that she observes many of the customs surrounding her activities and the care of the newborn infant. At night the
[776] child's clothes cannot be left outside, for it is believed that evil spirits will
[856] soil them. Throughout most of Greece the child's nails and hair are not cut before it is forty days old, when the clippings must be put in an envelope and preserved. In Aetolia anyone coming into the house must not go directly to see the lecho. He must sit for some time in another room and then
[777] enter her room; otherwise he brings her bad luck. Some families also insist that before a visitor enters the house, a burning charcoal be thrown on the doorstep for the newcomer to step over. In Artotina one is not supposed to enter the room of the mother in the afternoon or evening, although this taboo covers only the time after sunset in many other parts of Greece. Everywhere in rural Greece one encounters these customs surrounding the mother in the postnatal period and prohibitions which seek to forestall the visitation of any misfortune upon the infant.

844 In some parts of Central Greece as soon as a woman has given birth, she
●788 must "take the blessing." Someone from the house takes a jug of fresh water to the priest, who "reads" to the water, which is then taken back to the lecho. She takes the blessing (water) and washes herself, after which all the people who were present in the house at the time of the birth also take the blessing.

851 As long as the child remains unbaptized, it is thought to grow more
856 quickly and is not subject to the Evil Eye because it still belongs to the bad
754 spirits. However, as one informant stated, "The parents are afraid and want to baptize the child as quickly as possible so that they can put it on the path
[778] of God. As long as it is unbaptized, it is not allowed to wear the cross or have a little icon."

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Marriage

Even before an engagement is agreed upon, relatives check the kinship of the boy and girl to be sure that they are not too closely related to marry. In Mesolongi, for instance, a few years ago those related up to the fourth degree could not marry, but this is beginning to break down somewhat. Around Arta second cousins may marry, but in many parts of Macedonia there are restrictions up to third cousins. Generally throughout Greece, young people with the same godparent are considered "spiritual brethren" and cannot marry. It does not take long for some knowledgeable relative to review the kinship lines and decide whether the engagement would violate local customs, which are as important as the official church position on this matter.

Panos D. Bardis, in writing on the main features of the Greek family during the twentieth century, summarizes the teachings of the Greek Orthodox Church regarding the goals of marriage as follows: 1. increase of the human race; 2. promotion of mutual helpfulness among the members of the family; 3. restraint of passions; 4. Christian training of the young. He points out that some of these goals have been only partially achieved because of the patriarchal and authoritarian nature of the Greek family, but they remain those set forth by the church. Bardis also makes a useful summary of the essential elements of the engagement and wedding ceremonies:

1. Rings: the man's ring is of gold and symbolizes the sun, whereas the woman's ring is of silver and symbolizes the moon.
2. Crowns: these denote the marital bond and the glory of the sacrament. In Greece, these crowns are made of flowers, or evergreen, while the Russian Orthodox Church in earlier days preferred replicas of the Royal Crown.
3. Wine: this is offered to the couple in remembrance of the marriage in Cana, and symbolizes their mutual sharing of unhappiness in life.
4. Public confession of consent by both parties.
5. Blessing of the priest, which is considered very essential and is repeatedly stressed in the writings of the early church fathers.[9]

If one bears these five points in mind, the description of a peasant wedding takes on more meaning and makes greater sense to one not brought up in the Orthodox faith. Furthermore, it is apparent that the church ceremony itself is only one part of the unfolding drama in which the whole village takes a keen interest. Here, in free translation, is a day-by-day account of what happened in the village of Artotina in Aetolia, just prior to the outbreak of World War II.[10]

When the bride is ready with her dowry and the amount of money has been given to the groom's family, the date of the marriage is fixed, always on a Sunday unless one of the two people has been married before, in which case the

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[585] [587] [539] second marriage is set for a Saturday evening. (This custom brings to mind a common Greek proverb: "Everything was wrong, and even the wedding was on Monday.")

[252] On the Wednesday before the date of the marriage, both homes "start the leaven." In the evening the relatives of each home are present at the baking done from freshly milled flour and "untouched water." The kneading trough is placed in the middle of the room, and over this a girl and a boy hold a sieve through which the flour is sifted. Everybody is silent until, all at once, people start throwing coins into the sieve saying "Kalorizika" (Good luck). Three shots are fired to announce to the village that this has been done. The baking starts when enough flour has been sifted. Some of the people take dough which they smear onto the bride's or groom's face. After a late dinner, toward midnight, the people in the groom's home suggest going to the bride's home. When the two parties meet, there is dancing and singing and the firing of pistols. Later on, the groom's party goes back to his home to continue celebrations until daybreak.

[777] [202] [535]

[777] On Friday the display of the dowry starts. Women from all over the village come in to look at it and bring with them basil, rice, and cotton "just for good luck." When the women have seen the dowry, the "filling of the sacks" starts after the mother has put a copper container into a large homespun sack. While the bride stows away her household equipment and her own clothes into these sacks, those present throw in coins. Once the sacks have been filled, the mattresses, covers, and cushions are placed in piles and the friends sprinkle everything with rice and pin sweet-smelling herbs in between the clothes. Then the women, and especially the young girls, start dancing in the bride's courtyard.

[535] [203] [262] [765] On the same day the groom sends two boys around the village, one of whom carries a jug full of wine and the other a written invitation for relatives and friends to a dinner on the wedding day. The bride's father does the same. From Friday on, the special dishes are prepared: loaves of bread with symbolic patterns across the top, pies, meat, and wine. If a person is in mourning and is invited to the wedding dinner, he is obliged to take some food on Saturday evening.

[203] [262] On Saturday morning the bride calls the young girls "to help her get married." Some of her friends take Turkish delight, bonbons, and other sweets and go with these offerings to invite the rest of the young girls to the wedding.

[535] On Sunday after the regular morning church service, people begin to gather in the homes of the bride and the groom. The girls go to the bride's home to form an honorary escort and dance in her yard, while the boys dance in the groom's yard. During this time, while the bride is getting dressed, a party goes from the groom's home to fetch the sponsor (koumbaros) who either rides or goes on foot to the groom's home. There a white flag, adorned with apples and sweet herbs, is hoisted. The koumbaros is always the groom's godfather or one of his sons if the godfather has died. If for some reason the godfather cannot be present, he gives his blessing and permits the groom to choose another "best man" or sponsor. When the koumbaros has arrived at the groom's home, the procession is ready to start for the bride's home.

[608] [788]

First comes a young man carrying the flag, followed by the priest and the

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groom's relations. There is gay music and much shooting, which continues once the party has reached the bride's home. There the flag bearer puts the flag on the bride's roof and receives a ring biscuit from the bride in return. The groom gets off his horse and goes up the steps. As he reaches the top step, the bride's mother offers him wine and a boutonniere of basil, marjoram, or other plants, wrapped in a white handkerchief. The groom kisses her hand and she kisses him on both cheeks. She offers him wine, which he drinks, asking for her blessing. He returns the glass and puts the boutonniere in his lapel. The groom now enters the bride's home whereupon all relatives join him and, if they follow the old custom, give a small sum of money to the bride, who now turns toward the east and bows, then west, north, and south, so as to form the sign of the cross.

As soon as the relatives have received some sweet, the bride, usually leaning on the arm of a cousin, starts for the church. The others, including the groom's relatives, follow on foot. Then comes the church ceremony. When the couple have arrived at the altar, the priest begins to read the liturgy and then takes from a box the two wreaths of artificial blossoms, tied together by a ribbon, which the koumbaros has brought; the priest puts them together and says, starting with the man, "the Lord's servant [name] engages the Lord's servant [name]." He touches the foreheads of each as he says his or her name. He then holds the wreaths between the couple and makes the sign of the cross, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," three times for the groom and three times for the bride. The koumbaros, who is standing between the couple, receives the wreaths from the priest and, as the priest starts a chant, holds the wreaths over the heads of the couple and starts crossing them back and forth. When this is done, he puts the proper wreath on the proper person though the ribbon still connects the two wreaths. The same thing happens with the rings. After the koumbaros puts the rings on the correct fingers, the priest reads from the Bible, "what God hath joined together let no man put asunder" and separates the couple, who have been holding hands by the little fingers, by moving his hand between them. He next administers the communion — a sip of wine to the groom, the bride, and the koumbaros.

Perhaps the liveliest part of the whole proceeding is the "dance of Isaiah" which follows next. With the priest holding the Bible in one hand and the hand of the groom in the other, with the groom holding the bride, and the bride the koumbaros, the principals go around the table where the wreaths were laid before the ceremony started. They make the circuit three times, stopping four times in each circuit. During the course of this procession everybody is throwing bonbons and rice at the principals, sometimes with such telling force that the priest stops to warn the people not to be so energetic. The circuits completed, the couple and koumbaros resume their earlier position before the altar and listen to the priest read the final Scripture and receive his blessing.

In Artotina, the procession goes from the church to the bride's home. She is led by the groom and the koumbaros. The dowry is then loaded onto the pack animals to the accompaniment of traditional songs. The bride climbs upon the best animal and the groom, when mounted, takes a stand on her right. He takes a golden coin out of his pocket and hands it to her after making the sign of the

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little importance. (A pregnant woman is not supposed to serve as a koumbara, for people say that something bad will happen either to her or the child being baptized. A person is also supposed to baptize only children of the same sex, for if he serves as a koumbaros of both boys and girls, two of these with the same godparent might fall in love, which would be considered incest since spiritual bonds count as much as biological kinship in determining marriage prohibitions.)

After the small group of friends and relatives has gathered, the priest comes out from behind the altar. He usually displays great skill in handling the infant, even if the baby starts to howl his displeasure at the proceedings. The priest first turns the baby toward the east, blows into its face three times to chase away the evil spirits, seals it with the sign of the cross, and utters four exorcisms against temptation. Then the godparent renounces for the child "the devil and all his works" in answer to a thrice-repeated question from the priest, after which he recites the Apostles' Creed.[1]

The tepid water standing in a large copper basin is next blessed by the priest, who pours consecrated oil on it. Then the godparent, who has rubbed the baby all over with oil, hands it to the priest who three times plunges it into the font while he recites the appropriate formula. Once the immersion has been completed, the priest anoints the baby in different parts of its body and holds it up to the altar three times if it is a boy. The baby is next dressed and carried around the font three times by the godparent who holds a candle in one hand; the priest also joins in this procession. The ceremony concludes with additional words from the New Testament and a few words of admonition to the child, whereupon those present congratulate the godparent with the wish, "may it live." Then everyone goes to the home of the parents for a tremendous dinner, usually featuring roast lamb, which is just as important a part of the affair as the church ceremony. The godparent is given a place of high honor. (He also has had the responsibility of choosing the name for the child, usually that of a grandparent.[2])

Although I have attended many social functions in Greece, the joy and fun which characterize the baptismal feasts stand out in my memory. Not only is the food delicious and plentiful, but there is invariably plenty of wine and good-natured bantering. Most of the time, too, there is dancing, spirited and informal. Children of the guests as well as the brothers and sisters of the newly baptized infant are often present, and manage to end up in the dance or very much in its way, thereby adding to the general merriment. Weddings, such as the one described in the previous chapter, are occasions for merriment because they give promise of providing children, especially boys, to continue the family line; the baptism is merry because this promise has been fulfilled.

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considered so real that many villagers going outdoors after dark take both a light and a cross for protection. Nor should one do any washing of clothes during the Twelve Days, go to the fields to work, borrow from a neighbor, or believe in the efficacy of dreams since they will not come true at this time.[9]

After the Emmanuels have had their nameday on the twenty-sixth and the Stephens theirs on the twenty-seventh, the women start preparing the traditional New Year's Eve dishes. On the thirtieth special attention is given to the baking of the *vasilopita*, a special cake named in honor of Saint Basil (Hagios Vasilis), a very important figure. A coin has been placed in the cake, on the top of which the date of the year is written. Chestnuts and almonds are used for decorations.

On New Year's Eve, throughout the day, the children go around caroling again much as they did on Christmas Eve, but on this occasion it is St. Basil's kalenda. The children carry a highly decorated branch of the sorb-tree or sometimes the olive with which they tap people on the shoulder in order to wish them good luck during the year. In return they expect a gift such as dried fruit. The youngsters add a festive air to the day and help build up the emotional crescendo that becomes quite evident as evening approaches — everyone is anxious to find out what their luck will be for the coming year. Excitement is particularly keen around midnight with the cutting of the vasilopita; first, the head of the house cuts a piece of this cake for the Virgin, then one for the house, then one for the job that the head of the house does, then his own piece to be followed by one for his wife and each child in turn. Everyone is curious to find out in what piece the lucky coin will turn up. Should it be in the Virgin's piece, it will be placed on the household shrine, but if any member of the family finds it in his piece he feels fortunate indeed.

If the family members exchange any gifts, it is done at this special event on New Year's Eve and not at Christmas. In Northern Greece especially the villagers play cards to test their luck. If anyone loses he is apt to say, "If I lose at cards, I'll win during the year." Those who win say, "I'll be lucky."

The devout go to the New Year's Day church service at which the liturgy of St. Basil is employed, and when they come home they are careful to step into the house with their right foot; if they have brought a new icon from the church, the one carrying it will step into the house first. During the day the men pay calls on such village notables as the community president, the priest, the doctor, or the schoolteacher and are served wine with a sort of canape. The women, dressed in their very best, serve the guests. Students, soldiers, and others away from home try to get back to their village for at least a two- or three-day visit. On New Year's Day the card games are taken up again.

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The second, third, and fourth of January are ordinary working days, but on January 5 people expect a half-day off since it is Epiphany Eve, at which time children also sing the kalenda about the baptism of "the child of God." There is a five o'clock service in the morning at which occurs the first blessing of the waters. Those in attendance have brought jugs or cups for the blessed water which they take home to use in curing the sick or preventing the Evil Eye during the year. But on Epiphany itself occurs the most spectacular second blessing of the water, done in front of everybody at the church or near some body of water into which the cross is thrown. Swimmers are ready to dive in after it and struggle for its possession. The one who succeeds in gaining it is not only assured of good luck during the year but he can pass throughout the crowd and even the community to collect money from those solicited.

On Epiphany the priest visits the homes of the parish to bless each room by sprinkling holy water there, thus guaranteeing that all kallikantzari have been exorcised and chased back to their lairs beneath the earth until the next Twelve Days comes around.

Easter brings with it a wealth of customs, a blend of the pagan and the Christian, which are lightened by the coming of spring and the renewal of nature. Although they are "all of a piece" in the peasant mind, they can be best understood by the outsider in terms of Carnival, Lent, and Holy Week.

Carnival begins nine weeks before Easter and runs for three weeks. The second week is climaxed by Meat Sunday and the third week by Cheese Sunday. This is the time for weddings which otherwise could not take place until after Easter; this is the time for masquerades, although these are less pronounced in the villages than in the cities; this is also the time when family groups get together for little feasts before the Great Fast starts forty days before Easter. The last two Saturdays of Carnival and the first Saturday of Lent are *psychosabbata*, or memorial days for the dead. On the Thursday of the middle week of Carnival, members of the family, bringing their own food with them, gather in the home of the eldest relative to have a special meal, and on this occasion they allow some dish to scorch on the stove and smell up the house in the belief that this will bring good luck. This day is called *tsichnopempti*, since *tsichna* stands for the odor of burning flesh.

Meat Sunday is the eighth one before Easter (the villagers count Easter as one of the Sundays). On this day the people are supposed to start doing without meat products for the Lenten period. On the following Sunday, called Cheese Sunday, the forbidden foods are broadened to include milk products as well. This latter holiday is especially colorful in many parts of Greece, for on this day the village boys prepare piles of wood on various heights to be lit after dark. This is also the day for visiting older relatives

[These are bad spirits - ANALYST]

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796 and godparents in order to beg their forgiveness. Before the evening meal
[783] begins the younger members of the family kneel before their parents to ask their pardon for a wrongdoing and to receive a blessing. Carnival is definitely at an end.

796 Over and over again I asked local informants how many of the people
785 kept the Great Fast before Easter. In the villages the replies were often as
262 high as 80 percent of the older people, but more and more it seems that the younger generation keeps the fast for the one week immediately following Cheese Sunday and then takes it lightly until the Holy Week just prior to Easter. The villagers do not find it hard to give up meat because they actually have little available, but they do find that doing without eggs and cheese is restrictive. The pious manage to live on vegetables, bread, olives, and fruit.

796 Lent gets off to a frantic start with Clean Monday (*Kathara Deftera*),
[783] which is supposedly a period of purification of body and soul. Kitchen
[356] utensils are polished until they shine, walls whitewashed to make them look like new, floors scrubbed, and everything made ready for the big holiday
[574] which is in store. Townspeople in particular spend this day with their families on a picnic, with many localities having favorite spots that may originally have had a sacred meaning.

[533] Eight days before Easter is the Day of St. Lazarus. On its eve the young
[574] girls sing what are called Lazarus songs, and on the day itself they go visiting. They are decorated with flowers and hold palm or laurel branches in their hands. They represent the death and resurrection of Lazarus and re-
[535] ceive presents in return for their performance. On this day, too, there are frequently dances in the village squares.

[778] On Palm Sunday the palm or laurel branches are woven into the form
[787] of a cross, around which several folk beliefs center. For example, some vil-
[751] lagers believe they can tell the future from the cross; and others say this palm cross can be used against the Evil Eye.

[356] Holy Week finds the emotional build-up for Easter increasing day by day. On Monday the housewives put everything in order, particularly if bad weather previously has kept them from getting all the cleaning done. The devout go to church, usually in the evening, although a liturgy is held in
[825] the morning as well. In some villages the residents may tie rags in their front door to keep away insects. On Tuesday the people do very little regular work because, as the housewives put it, "we are getting ready for
[788] Easter." On Wednesday those attending the morning service are anointed
[252] with oil on the forehead, chin, and cheeks (sign of the cross) and, in rural areas, new yeast is prepared in the church and distributed to families for use throughout the year. On Holy Thursday everybody takes the afternoon off, "for it was on this afternoon that Christ was seized." To commemorate the crucifixion in the evening service, the priests read twelve passages from

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the Gospel and the cross is brought out to the center of the church where people can kiss it, place flowers before it, and show their sorrow over the crucifixion which has been called to their mind. Eggs are dyed red on this day, which is sometimes called Red Thursday, thus symbolizing the blood of Christ.

Good Friday is a holy day on which no one works. The women pick flowers with which to decorate the holy shroud (*Epitaphios*) or sacred icon. All day long the coffeehouses are closed and the people abstain from alcoholic drinks, olives, fish roe, or leavened bread. The evening church service lasts from eight to midnight. One of its features is the carrying of the flower-bedecked Epitaphios in a sacred funeral procession through the streets of the village. The priests in their rich robes, the altar boys, and the congregation walk solemnly as though they were actually burying their Lord. The procession goes around the church before the simulated bier is brought to rest before the church door at such a height that the worshippers can pass under it into the church, crossing themselves as they do so.

On Saturday members of the household prepare the Paschal lamb. A few attend the services from 10 A.M. to 1 P.M., but almost everybody attends the evening service. The bells summon the people at 11 P.M. and by 11:30 the congregation has gathered. At midnight, when the sacred fire supposedly descends from heaven and the glorious Easter hymn *Christos Aneste* bursts forth in joy, people hurry to light their candles, shoot off the firecrackers they have brought for the purpose, and greet each other with *Christos aneste* (Christ is risen) and expect the answer *Alethos aneste* (Risen indeed). The service may continue to daybreak, but many of the people go home much earlier, each carrying his lighted taper with him. Upon arriving at the house, the worshipper uses the taper to smudge a black cross on the lintel. In some villages it is customary earlier in the day to make a cross on the door from the blood of the Paschal lamb. Once back home, the family ends the long Lenten fast by eating the red-dyed Easter eggs and *mageirites*, a highly seasoned stew made of the lamb's visceral organs. The lamb, which has not been sufficiently roasted on the spit, is eaten later in the day, not only by the members of the family but by the many guests and relatives who have come back to the village from their homes in the city.

All of Monday and the afternoon of Tuesday following Easter are considered national holidays. By Wednesday people can get back to their regular tasks. Religious ceremonies and festivals have added a meaningful dimension to their lives and have reminded them of the long continuity which links them with their ancestors who, as they see it, became the guardians and proponents of pristine Christianity, which lives on in their own Orthodox Church.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1
Kalivi, Attica

were fed to the threshing machine by the girls, who were wearing goggles and what seemed to be gas masks to protect them from the dust. The women also were wiring the bales of straw which were taken away to be stacked. The president of the community told me:

> Anyone who wants to work signs up. Every fifteen days we put on a new crew so that quite a few people are employed and paid. We do have to keep a small permanent crew on the job throughout the threshing season, which lasts about sixty days, but almost every family has a chance to get some benefit. We only do the wheat belonging to the people of our community. We determine by lot the order in which a family's wheat is to be threshed. All the people bring their grain here, for we can thresh it much more cheaply than they could do it with animals.

We then went into the large olive-pressing plant, built in 1948, with a loan of about $30,000 from the Agricultural Bank, and learned how this part of the cooperative's business was conducted. We learned that each family's batch of olives, like its wheat, was processed separately and that it gave 8 percent of the oil to the cooperative, which is a standard amount taken by presses over Greece, plus an extra 3 percent contribution until the machinery is paid for. After that, it will have to pay only 4 instead of the customary 8 percent. When I noticed an icon in the pressing plant, the manager said that they asked the priest in to bless their work at the beginning of the season. Another man in the company remarked, "we like our religion, but we don't like our priests," a comment with which the others seemed to agree.

The more I learned about this cooperative in Kalivi, the more I realized what a shrewd investment the pasture land had been. The cooperative accumulates no money for itself but reinvests all profits into public works or special funds as determined by the directors of the cooperative. For example, a doctor is paid out of a cooperative philanthropic fund in return for looking after the poor of the community free of charge.

In addition to this general cooperative, to which all family heads belong, there are in Kalivi five other cooperatives. First, there is the credit cooperative explained to me as follows: "Since many people here have to depend upon the Agricultural Bank for loans, the credit cooperative gets the money for them and they do not have to make the contact themselves. If a local peasant wants sulphur or insecticides, the cooperative gets all that is needed. The individual then owes the cost to the cooperative. He pays no membership dues. Both men and women belong." It so happened that the president and the secretary of the community, plus three other people, made up the five-man executive committee of this credit cooperative.

Second, there is a livestock cooperative which the owners of the five thousand sheep in the community support. The members number forty,

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

793 in a handkerchief, thereby putting the priest under his control so he will [777] do no harm. But, bad luck or not, the priest is indispensable. At numerous repasts celebrating a christening, a nameday, or some other important event, we had to wait what seemed an interminable length of time because the priest could not arrive any earlier. Without him, nothing could get under way. One serious student of Greek rural life said: "In Greece when a priest is missing, it is a great calamity, for the Greek is not used to praying by himself without a priest." [11] In earlier days when the belief in vampires [754] was much more widespread than today, it was the priest, the minister of God, who alone had any power over them. He could calm the fears of the people.

793 794 The responsibility for the local parish does not fall entirely upon the priest, although the chief responsibility is his. There is a church board, consisting of three to five members, with the priest as president. The nominations for this board are submitted to the bishop by the priest, and the bishop designates them as official members of the board. One member of the board is the treasurer. When these local officials are asked just what their duties are, they usually include in their replies: to help the priest, to look after the finances, and to care for the church building. This board has as one of its chief duties the sale of the candles in the church vestibule and can use the proceeds of the sale for local church needs. In most communities it is considered a great honor to serve as a member of this board, although this position requires much work and frequently has more responsibility than the presidency of the local cooperative.

A recent development is the growth of the Sunday school, held after the regular morning service. Young boys, girls, and a few women are usually found in attendance, although young people up to the age of twenty are urged to attend. Throughout much of Greece the priest gives the instruc- [875] tion, although in Northern Greece we found many villages where the teacher had taken over this extra duty. Usually the same lesson is given to all age groups at the same time. It is customary in some places, such as the Attic villages we visited, for the school to be held on a weekday by the teacher, in which case it was not called Sunday school but "the preaching school."

795 The heart, however, of the Greek Orthodox Church — as of many other ●788 Christian bodies — is the Sunday-morning Mass. Anyone attending cannot help but notice the building itself, usually in the shape of a Greek cross, [346] with the ends terminating in apses. Over the center there is a dome repre- [778] senting heaven. In front, the altar screen (*eikonostasion*), on which one finds the icons or pictures of various saints, separates the altar (*vema*), [562] which no woman can enter, from the nave, where the worshippers congregate.[12] The priest moves back and forth between altar and nave in what seems a random manner to the uninitiated. As he turns to face the altar,

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

the icon of Christ is on his right and that of St. John the Baptist next to it. To his left one sees on the altar the icon of the Virgin, and farther to the left the icon of the saint for whom the church was named.

The congregation stands during the service, except for a few infirm who can lean against supports along the wall; there is no instrumental music, as the priest and the chanter carry the service themselves in a language that much of the time is unintelligible to the worshippers. The gospels are read in Koine, or New Testament Greek, and the liturgy, written by St. John Chrysostom toward the end of the fourth century, is in the Greek of that period. When the priest delivers a sermon, he uses his version of katharevousa, if he is sufficiently schooled; otherwise, he speaks in demotike. Apparently the worshippers are moved by the ceremony, the procession, the swinging censers, and the chanting even more than by the actual meaning of the words to which they listen. Now and then in the liturgy, however, come familiar passages which most can understand because of having learned their meaning in school or from some relative.

The worshippers, among whom small children may be running or tugging, include very few men. They come out for special festival services but show no interest in the regular Sunday-morning service, which is viewed as the woman's social hour. Even during the service women catch up on the latest happenings throughout the village.

The priest, however, is busy at other times, too. Dorothy Lee describes it this way:

> Religion permeates Greek life, punctuating it with ritual. No Greek, urban or rural, would think of initiating anything important without a religious inauguration. Schools open with the inaugurative *agiasmos*, "making holy"; the foundation stone of every house is laid with *agiasmos;* merchants begin new undertakings with the proper religious inauguration. On Epiphany, the sea is made holy for those who journey on it. In the country, blessed water is carried from the Epiphany Mass to sprinkle on the fields. The Virgin and the Saints are invoked, but not mainly as correctives; their main function is to endow an undertaking with good and success, it is not primarily to prevent or correct. . . . Priests are called in, and Saints and the Virgin invoked, also, when difficulties arise. Vows are made for the recovery of a loved one; the priest is called when the family has had a run of misfortune, to "make holy" and exorcise the evil. Priests conduct a rain litany to break a drought.[13]

The parish as such consists of no such array of organized groups as comprise an American congregation; the priest is not trying to convert the unbeliever or change the daily life of his people. He is there to help them meet life's emergencies, to instill a love for their religion and their country, and to act as peacemaker when disputes threaten the harmony of the community.[14]

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

So the bishop arranged for nuns at a convent on the edge of town to teach some of the girls to spin and weave silk. For two hundred years the nuns of this convent have been leaders in the silk industry. In 1770, under the Turks, the nuns with their abbess were exiled to Constantinople, went to Broussa, and learned the manipulation of silk. Later, when they were able to come back to Kalamata, they brought with them the silkworm eggs and started the silk industry. Many local girls come to the convent to learn how to carry on silkworm production and weaving on a simple loom at home. So, the bishop thought, these same nuns would be able to teach these orphan girls the silk industry, and many other things as well. When we visited the convent, eighteen girls were living there, but buildings were nearing completion which would accommodate up to fifty girls. Queen Frederika had come to help dedicate the cornerstones. But the nuns were anxious to show us where they produced the fine silk cloth we had been admiring. It was a strange experience to go with the nuns into the big room full of textile machines and to see the dexterity with which these women clad in medieval garments managed the complex machinery, even to the point of making many mechanical repairs.

One institution which the bishop showed us with evident pride was a tuberculosis sanatorium. To reach it we had to ride from his palace through the town to a mountain a few miles distant. We could not help notice the people's affection for the bishop: men, upon seeing him, would take off their hats and women would cross themselves. Some of this, we knew, was done because he was a bishop and thus due a certain amount of reverence, but the expression of warmth on the faces of the people indicated their genuine appreciation of what the bishop was doing for them.

When we arrived at the sanatorium, the bishop explained: "Why should a few old monks have such a beautiful site to live in when tuberculosis was proving such a scourge to so many people? I told the monks they could go pray somewhere else and that we would make this into a sanatorium." Of course, the bishop admitted that he was oversimplifying the problem a bit, for even the Greek Orthodox Church has its red tape. In any event, he had succeeded in getting about twenty patients out into this healthful spot under proper care. One of the first things he did upon our arrival was to go check the menu posted in the kitchen, for he takes a personal interest in what is being served to the patients.

While at the sanatorium we noticed a number of donkeys tied outside and many peasant men and women sitting at the door of the little church dedicated to St. Elijah. We learned that many of these peasants had come quite far on this Sunday and had brought gifts of food and oil to the sanatorium as *psychiko*, a word which comes from Byzantine times and means property donated to monasteries or churches by pious pilgrims for the salvation of their souls. These peasants proved a lighthearted group, probably

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

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788 because the mere act of bringing whatever they had to contribute gave them an emotional uplift.

793 But still we had not seen the end of the bishop's good works. In 1949 he had organized a home for the aged where seventy elderly people live in [737] relative comfort. The most ambitious project of all, however, was a poly- technic school started for the youth of the area. He had already spent about [874] $37,000 on the first floor alone. The school had opened the previous [177] November (1952) and already had two hundred pupils. Here was an institution that the Marshall Plan had helped. The school bore the name Papaflessa, in honor of one of the Greek patriots of the war of independ- [743] ence. While looking over this school we also learned about one more activity, a hospital of one hundred and fifty beds whose foundation had just recently been laid by the bishop and his coworkers.

793 The financing of even one of these undertakings, not to say the whole 794 complement of institutions, would be a staggering task in any country, especially in one as poorly endowed as Greece. Although the bishop never confided the secret of his success, I heard from others that skillful diplomacy had stood him in good stead. He would start with a certain amount that he could take from his bishop's fund; he would then go to Athens and persuade the people in the Welfare Ministry that local people would match the funds of the central government if it would contribute; then, back home, he would call together the leading businessmen and say that he could get so much from the central government if they would put up such-and-such an amount. Since all parties did their share, he was able to get the necessary money for capital expenditures.

793 For the operation of these institutions, and their total number of in- 794 mates or patients is considerable, he draws upon other resources. Some of the people in his diocese upon death will to some specified institution their [428] homes, olive groves, or money. Instead of having an expensive memorial [769] service, with several priests, for a dead relative at the stated periods required by the church, the people are having simple memorial services and giving the difference in what they would pay to an institution; instead of buying expensive wreaths, they are giving the money to the foundling home, the sanatorium, or perhaps the old people's home. The bishop, too, has organized the rural parishes so that each parish turns over olive oil, meat, cheese, and eggs to a person who collects this produce and distributes it to the institution. Or, as already mentioned, some of the people want to bring their contributions in person. Many are asked to donate labor: one builds a door, another puts in windows, and everybody has a sense of participating.

Visiting the bishop raised many questions in my mind about all that I had learned in America about modern child-welfare practices, care of the [748] aged, and the like. Social work as a profession is just getting a start in Greece; much humanitarian activity is carried on by upper-class women of

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika

watch the plays, and together concentrate their attention for over an hour on exactly the same activity.

The Village Church

The affairs of the church in Vasilika are administered by the priest with the aid of a committee of four men. Committee members are selected for three-year terms by the bishop from a list sent by the priest. One of the members of the committee is the treasurer for the church. He makes the collections at services and generally supervises the church's funds. In Vasilika income for the church is derived from the Sunday collections, the sale of offerings of wheat and olive oil made on special feast days, the sale of candles, rent on church property such as the old school building and the community office (both of these buildings were put up by the church as an investment), and the sale of produce from some twenty church-owned *stremata*. The priest is now given a small salary by the national government, but one-quarter of the church's income must be returned to the national treasury as a partial contribution of the community to the priest's salary. The other expenses of the church include the salaries (eighty drachmas a month) paid to each of the chanters and to the sexton. In Vasilika, the latter office is held by a sixty-year-old woman who is often assisted in her duties by her grandchildren. The physical maintenance of the buildings is also a responsibility of the church committee, and in 1959 they arranged for an extensive renovation of the main church.

The description just given is that of the formal organization of church affairs. In Vasilika the priest himself has more than his share of influence on all decisions and, indeed, it was said that one of the committee members in 1956 never went to any meetings of the church committee (they are said to be held about four times a year). The priest is a native of Vasilika, in his sixties. He is a strong, vigorous, and imposing figure, somewhat taller than the average villager and with a personality, temper, and voice to match. As he chants the liturgy the priest's deep voice fills the church, so that the elegant cadences of the Greek Orthodox mass gain added beauty. Because the priest and his sons have arranged his patrimony well, the priest as a private landowner is one of the more prosperous men in the village and for that reason, as well as for his personal qualities, he commands considerable respect.

Under the leadership of the priest, church affairs can, on rare occasions, involve the entire male population of the village. At about one o'clock on a rainy Sunday afternoon in the fall of 1955, the church bell rang. The men and the boys of the village streamed down the hill into the *agbora*. There they stood in the heavy rain as the priest, in his flowing black robes, as usual, and holding the only umbrella in the gathering over himself, began an impassioned oration. Several men responded with equal eloquence and after about a half-hour of speeches, they disbanded. It seems that one of the shepherds, who had rented a church-owned small house, was refusing to pay the rent asked of him. He had

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with a float competition on this day. In 1956, the winning float was a huge replica of the Trojan horse. 796 [484] [541] [177]

The events of Holy Week, with their culmination in the feasting and dancing on Easter Sunday, are from the villagers' point of view the most important time of the year. They anticipate *to Paskha* all the rest of the year; the women in particular asked about how Americans celebrated Easter more frequently than they asked about any other American custom, and whenever any general discussion of different customs came up, the women would spontaneously start describing Holy Week. Not the least of the reasons for the anticipation of Easter is that it is a spring festival and the villagers wait impatiently for spring. They look forward to the warmth of the sun after the cold and rainy winter, and they speak with affection of the beauty of the wild flowers which cover the hillsides in early spring.

During Holy Week in 1956, Maundy Thursday services began at 8:40 in the evening. Men and boys, as well as some women who rarely attended Sunday mass, appeared for the service, and on Good Friday and Easter Sunday virtually the entire village population, except for tiny infants and those who had to care for them, was present. By Thursday evening, relatives of the villagers from the surrounding villages and towns and from Athens had begun to arrive and to appear at the church. Just as on ordinary Sundays, the church filled gradually as the service progressed. Older men stood at the stalls up front, and several elderly women and pregnant women sat on chairs which were brought in for them and were placed in the back of the church in the woman's section. Women visitors were offered chairs; some accepted, some did not. Two of the village women got tired at one point and squatted on the floor, but as usual, the children, the younger men, and almost all the girls and women stood throughout. The service lasted until 11:00. In the course of it, there was considerable restlessness and low-voiced conversation among the men and giggling among the girls. But at the culmination of the service, when the image of Jesus on the Cross was brought from behind the screened altar and placed in the center of the church, there was complete quiet. 796 794 [574] [516] [778]

Many of the villagers can recite or chant the portions of the New Testament which are read as part of the Holy Week services, and do so under their breath—really only to themselves, since the priest and the chanters sing the chants aloud. Even among these villagers, however, very few have a literal understanding of the text, for it is in New Testament Greek, which is a generalized form of Eastern Mediterranean Greek developed in the last centuries of the pagan and early centuries of the Christian era. It is therefore about as different from the contemporary demotic Greek spoken in the village as Chaucerian English is from Modern English. Nevertheless, all the villagers know the main outlines of the New Testament depicting the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and know which portions are being sung and symbolically re-enacted at each of the Holy Week services. 788 198

The villagers say that on Good Friday no one should work either in the fields or in the house, but these prohibitions were not strictly adhered to. In the 796 [461]

[Good Friday]

796 morning, small boys went from house to house crying, *"Mavros in o uranos,"* [778] "The sky is black," and they were given money or eggs. Meanwhile, the girls [788] of the village worked inside the church covering with wild flowers the sedan-chairlike wooden frame in which an oil painting of Jesus on his bier was to be carried around the village that night. The frame and the icon together are called the *epitafios*. The girls seemed thoroughly to enjoy the morning's work, and they 796 laughed, giggled, jostled each other, and called out orders. Occasionally they 562 sang as they worked. It appeared also as if they were taking particular joy in being inside the church with no men to restrain them. They took turns sprawling over the stalls in which, as females, they rarely sat during a service. They also went up to the chanters' stand and recited some of the cantilations which were to be sung that night—the girls can follow the liturgy only silently during the course of the actual service. Some of the younger girls even dared each other [778] to go behind the panel to the altar, a place forbidden to females, but none actually did. They seemed uneasy and were even frightened at the suggestion.

796 The church bell rang at 2:20 that afternoon. The priest, with one of the chanters and his son, performed the service in the course of which he brought 788 the icon from behind the altar, covered it with a white cloth and placed it in its bower. In accordance with the symbolic re-enactment of the event, only the women and girls (and a few schoolboys) were in the church at the time. Once the icon was in place and strewn with flowers, the priest and then the children [764] went up to kiss it. The priest explained that it should be done slowly and deliberately, exactly as it was done for the dead in the village funeral rituals.

Good Friday services began that night at 9:00. At 11:00 the *epitafios* was carried out of the church by four boys. These marched in procession with the *epitafios* behind boys carrying the *lavara* (standards). Behind the *epitafios* walked the priest and the chanters. The rest of the villagers followed holding candles to light the way as the *epitafios* was carried around the entire village. As the bells of the three village churches pealed, and the children chanted *"Enas ine o theos"* and *"Panayia dhespina,"* "God is one" and "Our Lady, the All Holy One," the villagers picked their way carefully over the stones and ruts as they climbed the hillside, circled the whole settlement, and climbed down again on the other side. When the procession reached the church door once more, the boys held the bier high so that the returning congregation passed into the church under it. The service was over shortly after midnight.

796 On Holy Saturday, sweet Easter breads with red eggs inside were dis-[262] played, other eggs were dyed red, last minute finishing touches were given to Easter clothes and last house-cleaning chores were completed. Some people [461] slaughtered the Easter lamb on Saturday, others waited until Sunday. In the meantime, field chores went on as usual. Everyone rested for a few hours, from about 9:00 Saturday night until the Easter Sunday services began shortly after [788] midnight. These lasted until 4:00 in the morning, with two periods of climax. [787] The first occurred when all the lights in the church were put out and the priest kindled the new light. The boys rushed up to see who could be the first to light his own candle from that of the priest's. They said the winner would be the first of the boys to be married. The rest of the congregation then lit its

2:Friedl E-5 (1955-1959)1963 EH1 Greece EH1
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candles from the priest's, or from each other's if they got impatient waiting to reach the priest. The second climax was, of course, the moment when, with the entire congregation standing outside the church, the priest announced, *"Khristos anesti,"* "Christ is risen," and the boys set off firecrackers.

After the service, people took a short nap, because by 6:00 in the morning, final preparations for Easter dinner would start. As has already been indicated, families joined with neighbors or relatives to eat the spit-roasted Easter lamb. Visiting relatives moved about to greet the villagers they knew. Baptisms, which had been arranged for the afternoon because prospective godparents enjoyed visiting the village at Easter, took place in the church, and the white baptismal clothes of the babies added sparkle to all the Easter finery. After an afternoon service in the church of St. Nicholas, the musicians came, settled in the *agbora,* and dancing began. But fewer villagers participated in either the dancing or the watching than at Carnival, because people preferred to spend more time at home with their visiting relatives. Nevertheless, a good crowd kept the *agbora* musicians occupied until eight in the evening, after which singing could be heard here and there about the village. The next day some of the young boys claimed to have been up singing half the night.

The description just given is only a brief outline of the main events and lacks many details of the village's celebration of Easter. My purpose in including it here is to illustrate the point that Carnival and Holy Week are times at which the Greek Orthodox rites and the accompanying customs provide activities in which all villagers participate at the same time and within the confines of Vasilika. Even under these circumstances, however, the visiting relatives act as a countervailing centrifugal force, pulling each family in the direction of its extra-village interests, as they use the holiday visit as an opportunity for family consultations on the problems of the coming year, and as the visitors tell of their lives in other villages, in towns, and in the cities.

Vasilika's *paniyiri,* the feast day of its patron saints, St. Cosmos and St. Damian, on the 1st of July, is another occasion when a religious event is celebrated by the entire village and draws visitors to the community. Other holy days and Sunday masses do not draw all the villagers together in the same way. School children are the most faithful communicants for regular Sunday mass; a small proportion of women and girls attend regularly, but the rest of the inhabitants appear to attend sporadically, as they please. During periods of heavy agricultural work, mass may be omitted on a Sunday. For the most part, individuals and families, rather than the village, are the units for participation in the formal religious activity of the settlement.

The Villagers as Greeks

To summarize the situation, the formal organization of the village community, the *kinotis,* provides neither autonomy in village affairs nor a unified structure. Decisions made by the village leaders are subject to approval by outside political authorities. Governmental, commercial, religious, and educa-

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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shores of Albion and the territories of the "pope of another world". For the Greek, as for the western Christian, the horizon has contracted, and it is only by a considerable effort of the imagination that we can hope to comprehend an outlook that is unfamiliar to the point of fantasy.

One is sometimes asked what are the main points of difference between eastern and western Christendom, in terms which make it quite clear that one's questioner is thinking of particular doctrinal propositions. It can hardly be too strongly emphasised, however, that the manifest cleavage which now exists between the Orthodox and other Christians is less a matter of disagreement on specific issues than of two widely divergent attitudes and approaches. This is not to deny the reality and importance of certain dogmatic questions (such as that concerning the procession of the Holy Spirit, for example), but merely to assert that it is not there that the primary differences are to be sought. The truth of this contention is borne out by certain recent developments in western Europe, where the influence of what is commonly known as the liturgical movement has brought about in some very diverse quarters a radically changed attitude toward the Christian mystery: an attitude which—though there is nothing peculiarly *eastern* about it—has at times seemed to come very close to that which has ever been characteristic of the Orthodox world. Where this change of attitude has shown itself it has gone far towards creating a genuine *rapprochement* between theologians of east and west: much farther, I would add, than any amount of discussion of specific points of doctrine where no such common approach exists.

A generation of ecumenical conversation has revealed something of the difficulties of discussion amongst western Christians of different traditions: yet in the west, at least, most of the basic assumptions are held in common. Some affirm and some deny but all set out from the same premises—all speak what is virtually the same language. The crucial difficulty in relations between the Orthodox and western Christians lies in the decay of a common tongue. As the Russian lay theologian A. S. Khomiakov puts it: "All Protestants are crypto-papists . . . all the west knows but one datum *a*; whether it be preceded by the positive sign +, as with the Romanists, or with the negative — as with the Protestants, the *a* remains the same. ... . A passage to Orthodoxy is a rushing into a new and unknown world."

It is significant that it is the restoration of the liturgy to its rightful

5:Hammond M-5 (1948-1950)1956
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THE WATERS OF MARAH

795 788 place in the Church's life which, more than anything else, has brought about a partial reassertion of orthodoxy in the west during recent years, for orthodoxy is not so much a matter of 'right opinion' as of 'right worship'. The surest path to a real understanding of the Orthodox Church is through her liturgical life. There is, with all its naïvety, much to be learned from the legend, which has come down to us in a mediaeval Russian chronicle, concerning the envoys of the Prince of Kiev. That monarch, so the story runs, wishing to make Christianity the religion of his people but doubtful as to which of its several forms was authentic, sent envoys to distant lands that they might judge for themselves. The envoys went first to the heretical Bulgars. They observed the way in which the people worshipped; how they bowed themselves to the ground and gazed hither and thither like men possessed. But, alas! "There is no joy among them," they reported upon their return to Kiev, "but only sadness and a frightful smell!" Next, they visited the Germans; but the worship of Latin Christendom left them unmoved. Thence, however, they journeyed to Byzantium, and were present at the divine liturgy of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, in the great church of the holy wisdom; and there, they afterwards related, "we did not know if we were on earth or in heaven; for there is no such splendour to be found anywhere upon earth. Describe it we cannot: we know only that it is there that God dwells among men."

For the Greek Christian, as for the Russian, the humblest village church is always *heaven upon earth*: the place where men and women, according to their capacity and desire, are caught up into the adoring worship of the redeemed cosmos; where dogmas are no barren abstractions but hymns of exulting praise, and the saving acts of the divine compassion—the cross, the tomb, the resurrection on the third day and the ascension into the heavenly places—are made present and actual through the operation of the Holy Spirit who "ever was, and is and shall be; having neither beginning nor ending, but for ever joined to and numbered with the Father and the Son . . . through whom the Father is known, and the Son is glorified, and by all acknowledged, one power, one worship and one order of the Holy Trinity."

It is important to grasp this essentially liturgical approach, for it provides the key to much else; to the Greek Christian's understanding of scripture, to personal piety, and to the preservation of the faith during the centuries of oppression. Orthodox Christendom has never undergone

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an upheaval comparable to that which shattered the unity of the western world in the sixteenth century, not on account of the glacier of Turkish dominion which descended upon it a hundred years earlier, but because it had never known that separation of theology and mysticism, liturgy and personal devotion, which—when all is said as to the influence of political and economic factors—is required to explain the all-engulfing cataclysm of the Reformation.

In the next chapter I propose to consider certain features of the long history of the Greek Church in so far as they exercise a lively influence upon the contemporary scene; for in Greece it is peculiarly difficult to disentangle past and present, and historical memory is remarkably tenacious. In the remotest mountain villages of Epirus or the Peloponnese one may meet with small children who do not merely know far more about Lord Byron than one can reasonably expect of the majority of his countrymen—*that*, after a little time in Greece, one takes for granted—but who can sometimes relate strange apocryphal stories of Admiral Codrington or Sir Richard Church; and, in the imagination of the monks of Athos, Pope Innocent III occupies a position similar to that which Oliver Cromwell holds amongst the peasant farmers of Ireland.

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nevertheless sufficiently striking. A Russian professor, a theologian of the diaspora, once described to me the overwhelming impression that this had made upon him when he first visited Greece in the 'twenties. He had travelled by train from Paris, and at the Greek frontier a *douanier* boarded the train to greet him and his companion with the very salutation wherewith the risen Lord had greeted His wondering disciples on the first Easter morning. Two days later the Metropolitan of Salonica had turned to him during the course of a conference with the invitation: "The *logos* is with the *kyrios!*"

The present Metropolitan of Salonica, the Lord Panteleimon, like his brethren at Corinth, Verroia and elsewhere, traces his succession in an unbroken line to the first *episkopos* of the church founded by the apostle of the Gentiles. Though the ancient Neapolis is now Cavalla, and Philippi has dwindled to a straggling line of cottages clinging to the hillside above the ruins of the Roman city, the local bishop retains the style of 'Metropolitan of Philippi and Neapolis'. There, as at Corinth, at Verroia and at Salonica, St. Paul's letters have been read in the churches for 1,900 years in their original Greek. To this day the Greek schoolboy hears the Gospels read at the liturgy in the language in which they were written.

The liturgy itself has undergone but little change for the best part of 1,500 years: the present Metropolitan of Salonica calls upon God to change the bread and wine at the eucharist in the very words used by his fifth-century predecessors in this apostolic see. The deacon who leads the prayers of the congregation in the basilica of St. Demetrius, and summons the catechumens to withdraw before the solemn recitation of the creed, employs formulas which were already traditional long before this great church was first erected.

The Greek Christian still stands to pray, and the ancient canons expressly prohibiting kneeling on the Lord's day (which is the day of the resurrection) and during the period from Easter to Pentecost are carefully observed (witness the controversy recently provoked by the custom, which has grown up within the new movements, of the laity kneeling at the invocation of the Holy Spirit). He still brings his bread and wine to church for the eucharistic offering. To this very day, between Easter and Pentecost, all other greetings give place to the triumphant *Christos anesti!* Christ is risen! and the reply, *Verily He is risen!* As recently as Dr. Covel's day this salutation was accompanied by a mutual embrace: "on meeting another," says the Doctor, "they

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178 795 576 Embrace one another, and join mutually the side of the Mouth or Cheek to the other . . . and since the Resurrection of Christ is the Miracle of Miracles, and the main Pillar of our Christian Faith and Hope, I am much perswaded that this might be the very manner and way of giving the Holy Kiss amongst the Primitive Christians."

178 795 788 [771] Nor is all this a matter of mere outward forms. Through all the vicissitudes of her history the Greek Church has been enabled to preserve something of the very spirit of the first age of Christianity. Her liturgy still enshrines that element of sheer joy in the resurrection of the Lord that we find in so many of the early Christian writings. The spirit of the ancient fathers of the Church lives on in the liturgy and in the piety of the ordinary Greek Christian. To enter into the spirit of the eastern liturgies is to comprehend as is possible in no other way the characteristic notes of Orthodox spirituality.

This is true above all of the liturgy of Holy Week and Eastertide; here one is perhaps most acutely conscious of the revolution that has been wrought in post-mediaeval western piety. It is a far cry from the Byzantine liturgy of the holy passion to that preoccupation with the sufferings of Christ with which we are familiar. Even in the darkness of the holy and great Friday the note of joy is sounded; the narrative of the passion is interspersed with the divine praises: it is the record of the triumph of the King, and Christ the Victor reigns in royal purple from His throne on Calvary.

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To-day is hanged upon the Tree
He who hanged the earth free in the midst of the waters.
A crown of thorns crowns Him who is King of the angels.
He who wraps the heavens in clouds
is wrapt about with the purple of mockery;
He who freed Adam in Jordan
is smote with hands;
He who is the Bridegroom of the Church
is transfixed with nails;
He who is the Son of the Virgin
is pierced with a spear.
We worship Thy Passion, O Christ;
Show us also Thy glorious Resurrection!

[771] It is because her life is rooted so completely in the liturgy that the

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THE PATTERN OF HISTORY

Orthodox Church has been able to preserve in all its integrity the faith once delivered to the saints. Ecclesiastical organisation has never in eastern Christendom been looked upon as having an importance such as, at any rate from the eleventh century onwards, it assumed in the west. Provided only that he is free to participate fully in the liturgical life of his local church, the Greek or Russian Christian is prepared to sit curiously lightly to matters of jurisdiction and the machinery of ecclesiastical government and administration. Even when, as in the U.S.S.R. to-day, the Church is subject to every imaginable restriction save this bare permission to celebrate the divine mysteries, she can yet contrive to hold fast to her traditions with a tenacity which must often strike the western Christian as little short of miraculous: "the stable perseverance in these our days of the *Greek* Church", wrote Rycaut in the seventeenth century, "notwithstanding the Oppression and Contempt put upon it by the *Turk* . . . is a Confirmation no less convincing than the Miracles and Power which attended its first beginnings."

So, throughout the long centuries of Turkish domination, the Greek Church held fast the traditions which enshrined the saving truths of the divine economy. The Gospel was preached less by means of homilies and sermons than through the regular cycle of feast and fast; though Christian schools were maintained, often with great heroism in the face of overwhelming difficulties, the children of Hellas relied even more upon the visible catechism of the Church's liturgy. So it was that the faith was preserved as a royal treasure: the life of the mystical body burned on in secret, though the royal priesthood might be "expelled their Churches and those converted into Moschs; the Mysteries of the Altar conceal'd in secret and dark places . . ."

It is in remote townships like Kastoria that one can best enter into the spirit of the Greek Church under the Turkish yoke. To the traveller who approaches the ancient city of Diocletian from the southward there is little to suggest the presence of some seventy-two churches. Kastoria reveals its secrets only to those who are prepared to spend several days scrambling up and down the stony paths below the nineteenth-century metropolis, where tiny churches are set obscurely amidst the high, fortress-like domestic architecture of a later age. A great number of these churches date from Byzantine days, for from about the seventh century onwards this mountain township served as a place of exile for many whose presence at Constantinople was, for one reason or another, considered undesirable. Many more were built during the

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centuries of Turkish dominion. Outwardly they are scarcely distinguishable from the cottages which surround them: only the shallow apse at the east end proclaims the church.

Within, however, one finds oneself in another world. Walls unpierced by windows are covered with paintings which set forth the whole story of creation and redemption. Patriarchs and prophets mingle with the saints of the new dispensation; Elias is caught up to heaven in a chariot of fire and Jonah goes down to the bottoms of the mountains with the weeds wrapped about his head; those whose names are honoured throughout the length and breadth of Christendom, Athanasius, Basil and Gregory the Divine, rub shoulders with local saints like St. George of Iannina and the Neo-Martyrs; the Lord Christ is baptised in Jordan, He changes the water into wine and reigns in triumph from the tree of Calvary; the Holy Spirit descends in tongues of fire upon the apostles. Here in these little chapels—"rather like Vaults or Sepulchres than Churches, having their Roofs almost levelled with the Superficies of the Earth, lest the most ordinary exsurgency of structure should be accused for triumph of Religion, and to stand in competition with the lofty Spires of the *Mahometan* Moschs"—the mysterious life of the local church was nourished throughout the dark days of oppression; the saints which were in Kastoria, like their brethren at Thessalonica, obeyed the apostolic injunction to hold fast the traditions which they had been taught.

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Not infrequently, it must be confessed, zeal for the preservation of the faith in the midst of an alien environment gave rise to a certain lack of discrimination. The pure gold of the apostolic tradition has not been handed down from generation to generation without gathering to itself certain accretions of doubtful worth, and the simple Christian is not always able to distinguish the one from the other or prepared even to admit the possibility of such intermingling.

> This Reverence to the Church [observes one of the old writers] produces a firm belief and strict adherence to the Articles of it, and to all the Ceremonies and matters the most minute and indifferent, not suffering the least change or alteration in them. For although they are sensible (as many of their Priests have confessed to me) of the inconvenient length of their Liturgies . . . and of many superstitious Customs and Ceremonies derived to them from the times of *Gentilism*, which are now ingrafted into, and as it were grown up

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with their Religion, and many other Rites of which the wiser men are ashamed, and wish they were amended; yet they fear to correct and alter them . . . lest the People observing their Guides to vary in the least point from their ancient, and (as they imagine) their Canonical Profession, should begin to suspect the truth of all, and from a doubt dispute themselves into an indifference, and thence into an entire desertion of the Faith.

The dispute about the substitution of the Gregorian calendar for the Julian has shown that a substantial body of opinion (especially amongst the monks of Athos), is still violently opposed to change and reform even in matters which might to the detached observer seem to have little religious significance. With the solitary exception of 'modernist' Vatopedi, the whole monastic community of the holy mountain still insists on using the old reckoning. Elsewhere in Greece one finds scattered groups of Old Calendarists who have separated themselves from the local bishop rather than accept the reformed calendar. The *Palaiomerologitai*, as they are known, include clergy and monks and until recently were in possession of several small convents.

Though it may be that political motives have played a certain part in this curious controversy, it would be rash to deny the presence of a strong element of sincere religious feeling. Even the saints are liable to be involved in these disputes about the calendar. Witness the story of the 'modernist' *papas* who ventured to sing a hymn in honour of St. George before the eikon of the saint on the new-fangled day, and was not a little disconcerted when the saint fell flat on his face: what clearer testimony could there be to the detestation felt for the new calendar in the heavenly places?

The centuries of oppression did but strengthen the awareness (already more marked amongst eastern Christians than in the clerkly west), that the maintenance of holy tradition is the responsibility of the whole body of the faithful—not of the clergy alone. The English layman still feels himself more or less at the mercy of the parson—so far at least as what goes on in his parish church is concerned. Not so the Greek. A *papas* who ventured to deviate in the least particular from the forms prescribed by immemorial custom would suffer prompt correction from his congregation. If a bishop should fall into strange novel doctrines contrary to the traditions of the fathers, the holy people of God would rise up and denounce him. In this, as in other matters,

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the effect of the Turkish dominion was to foster—perhaps to excess—an attitude which was already discernible in Byzantine days and which always made for a certain liveliness in ecclesiastical affairs.

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During the last few years it has been becoming increasingly clear that the episode which may, for the sake of brevity, be referred to as '1054 and all that' has gained a far more important place in our text-books of European history than it justly merits. No longer is it possible to regard the schism of Cerularius as marking the decisive breach between eastern Christendom and the west. A date which seemed to hold out to the struggling schoolboy a refuge no less secure than that of the Conqueror's triumph at Hastings has been swept away, to leave him floundering in the troubled waters of speculation and surmise. But whatever the immediate causes of the disastrous breach which was to divide Christendom into warring factions, and which underlies all our western divisions, there can be little question that far the greatest factor in the hardening of the schism was the invasion of the Levant by the crusading Franks, the sack of Constantinople and the establishment of a Latin hierarchy. These unhappy events made an impression upon the Greek mind that the passing of eight centuries has not effaced.

The legend of Frankish aggression—unhistorical and confused though it be—lives on in our own day especially amongst the monks. Pope Innocent III, Michael Palaeologus, the Patriarch Bekkos, the Catalans who established themselves in the Kassandra peninsula at the beginning of the fourteenth century, and Pope Eugenius IV, who flourished more than a century later, are all confounded in a wild farrago of monkish imagination and prejudice. The Pope, attended by Frankish soldiers and executioners, presides over the martyrdom of the twenty-six monks of Zographou, and terrible stories are still to be heard on the holy mountain of the gruesome fate that befell the renegade monks who took part in the Latin mass at the Lavra. In a painting at the Serbian convent of Chilandari the Pope appears in the company of Mahomet and the arch-heretic Arius, and the earth opens and swallows them up together.

The traveller in monastic Greece must not, therefore, be surprised to find that an unwary allusion to the Pope can still conjure up in the imagination of a Greek monk a nightmare figure far surpassing the inventions of the most rabid Protestant. I recall one such reference to

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A VILLAGE FESTIVAL

> If any Art or Polity can be said to have place over the affection of the People, none seems more efficacious than the strict observation of the Fasts and Feasts of their Church, by which the people are taught as in a visible *Catechism* . . . more (I dare say) than by their ill-composed Sermons, or repetition of the Scripture in the Vulgar Tongue; for being severely imposed, and observed with much solemnity, they affect the Vulgar with an awe of something divine and extraordinary in them.
>
> PAUL RYCAUT

A FEW years after the restoration of the house of Stuart to the English throne, the Archbishop of Larissa, in Thessaly, received an unexpected visitor: a certain Père Robert, *Capucin de Saint-Jaques à Paris, et Aumonier de l'Ambassadeur de France*. This reverend personage chancing to be in Larissa during Holy Week (according to the western reckoning), he attended a celebration of what, despite a certain confusedness in his account, was manifestly the liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. Describing this in the journal which was his constant travelling companion during the period 1665-69, he observes that the Archbishop, when he had delivered his sermon, "went in procession about the church, accompanied by nine bishops, his suffragans". To-day, though the traveller may but rarely and with great good fortune chance upon such a mitred assembly as that which Père Robert describes, the divine liturgy is still celebrated, even in the smallest and poorest village of the Greek mountain dioceses, with something of its traditional splendour, and in such fashion as to impress upon the mind of the least sensitive of worshippers that he is a participant in no work of man's devising but in the very worship of heaven; in the praises of those who sing without ceasing to the glory of the holy and consubstantial and life-giving and undivided Trinity.

The festival which is observed on August 15th is described in the service-books as that of the Dormition, or Falling Asleep (*Koimesis*), "of our most holy, glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin

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interior of the vehicle, there were others who had with less formality installed themselves amidst the multitudinous array of baggage, livestock and firearms which renders every Greek bus incapable of passing beneath what used, in England at least, to be described as 'a low bridge'. To the north of Drama the road crosses a dusty plain for several kilometres and then turns sharply to the right between two high peaks and winds laboriously up a rocky defile. Every few hundred yards there was a bridge: either guarded by a block-house, manned by men of the mobile section of the home-guard, or else lying in ruins and necessitating a perilous descent into a dried-up water course. These occasional outposts apart, we saw no human habitation for the best part of another twenty kilometres, when we reached the head of the pass. Here we halted for a few minutes and refreshed ourselves with cold mountain water from a stream by the roadside. Shortly after three o'clock we began the descent into the well-watered plateau, within sight of the Bulgarian frontier, on the northern fringe of which lies the village of Kato Nevrokopi, and which had been the scene of bitter fighting when the Germans poured into Greece in April, 1941. A few minutes later we were among the houses of Nevrokopi and my fellow-passengers pointed out to me the cottage, in no way distinguishable from its neighbours save by the board bearing the Byzantine eagles and the inscription *ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΝΕΥΡΟΚΟΠΙΟΥ* beside the door, which, *faute de mieux*, has served as the bishop's headquarters since 1945: the old metropolis having been destroyed during the Bulgarian occupation of eastern Macedonia.

Half-past three on a warm August afternoon not being a discreet hour at which to call on a Greek bishop, I retired to the green shade of a vine beside the *plateia* to sip coffee and discuss such varied topics as the Bishop of Birmingham, Schiller and the Scottish liturgy (and, inevitably, the incredible folly of the British electorate in banishing Mr. Churchill to the opposition benches), with the commanding officer of the gendarmerie and other local celebrities. Meanwhile, a troop of small boys was despatched at regular intervals to reconnoitre in the vicinity of the metropolis. At half-past four it was reported that the windows were open (all true Greeks sleep with windows and shutters firmly closed), and I was thereupon escorted to the metropolis where I was warmly welcomed by the Bishop. We talked until a little after six o'clock, when the *epèmerios*, or curate, of the parish arrived to lead the way to church for evensong.

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When the Metropolitan was suitably attired he took his silver-headed stick and we set out in a little procession towards the cathedral church of St. Demetrius, which towers above the wretched cottages that surround it like some great vessel among her attendant tugs. The Metropolitan and myself were preceded by the parish priest, while well ahead there danced a certain Anargyri, whose daily joy and responsibility it is to remove straying cattle and goats from the Bishop's path, to wave to their feet the loungers on doorsteps, the coffee drinkers and those who play *trictrac* in their leafy retreats; finally, to silence the village's solitary gramophone and other profane noises. As our little procession hove in sight, the bell-ringer, stationed among his charges at the summit of the campanile, shattered the slumbers of all who had immoderately prolonged their siesta, and we made our way up the steps into the narthex of a surprisingly lofty church.

After evensong we returned, somewhat less formally, to the Bishop's cottage for supper—a simple meal of potatoes and fruit (by reason of the fast) which was shared by his two nephews, both of them orphans. I slept that night at an inn adjoining the cottage-metropolis.

The following morning, it being Sunday, we were in church from a quarter to seven until a little after ten. The liturgy ended, the colonel in charge of the local garrison drove us out in his jeep to the village of Granitsi, high on the wooded hills above the plateau, where we sat under a great oak while the villagers came to greet their father in God and brought little gifts of fruit and honey.

At evensong in the cathedral that evening, while the cantors sang of:

> Things creeping innumerable,
> Both small and great beasts,

a dormouse appeared from behind the cupboard where the liturgical books were stored, and sat most devoutly before the beautiful doors for a considerable space. The Bishop told me afterwards that it was the first mouse—the colloquial *pontikos*, with a twinkle at my use of the classical word—he had seen in the church during the four years that had elapsed since his consecration as Metropolitan of the smallest and poorest see of Greece.

The old diocese of Nevrokopi had included 120 communities. After the first Balkan war, however, it had been partitioned, and ninety of its villages as well as the town of Nevrokopi now lie within Bulgarian

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and his mitre in its brass box, were borne away to the church on a flood of ragged boys, and we followed rather more sedately while the bells jangled in the tower. The Metropolitan went straight to his throne on the south side of the church after vesting in the open narthex, and I was led to the stall on his right, immediately beneath the great eikon of the Pantocrator in the dome. The church had been recently redecorated and a gay diaper pattern now covered every part of the interior that was not frescoed. Not for the first time I was struck by the contrast between the comeliness and colour of the village church and the squalid dwellings which surrounded it. The little groups of people who had followed us up the stony path from the *mesochori*, or village-square, crowded into the church, setting up their candles before the eikons of our Lord and His Mother, bringing loaves bearing the seal "Jesus Christ conquers" and wine for the offering, oil for the lamps and lists of relatives and friends, both living and departed, to be commemorated at the liturgy that morning. The parish priest came with the singers and the verger to ask the Bishop's blessing, and the morning office (the first part of which had been sung before our arrival) was taken up again.

While the Magnificat was being sung, the parish priest went all about the building censing the holy things and the holy people with a proper indiscrimination, and when the great doxology was reached the sacristan ran down the church and set the three chandeliers swinging in alarming fashion while the belfry again resounded to the clash of metal. Mattins gave place to the divine liturgy; the church became more and more crowded till the people filled the narthex and overflowed down the steps into the path outside. The scouts arrived; the chandeliers swung more slowly, scattering drops of molten wax upon the heads of the congregation and splashing the strip of brightly coloured carpet which extended from the holy table down into the midst of the church; the incense and the venerable prayers rose to heaven, and the children scrambled up the stair leading to the high pulpit or balanced on the backs of the stalls occupied by their grandfathers.

The Epistle (from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians), was read by the chief singer, or *psaltes*, a soldier from the garrison at Nevrokopi who had learned the traditional chant in some village church on Pangaion, overlooking the ruined basilica where "the saints in Christ Jesus which were in Philippi" celebrated in their day that same holy offering in which we at Dasoto were taking part. There, like the ragged boys who now pressed upon him from all sides, he had joined with slowly growing

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as to lead me to suspect the offering of a discreet compliment to western Christendom; the fruits of the word, love, joy and peace, made manifest in the life and death of the blessed Polycarp. 796

"And you boys", said the Bishop, with 'a diligent and busy cast of his eye' toward certain of the more youthful of his auditors; "you who steal eggs and fruit and take other people's food out of the communal oven: there is no reason why you—if you keep the word of God faithfully—should not be as great as St. Peter or St. Paul, or why at the end of your lives you should not be able to echo those ever-memorable words of Polycarp: 'These eighty and six years have I been His servant' . . ."

Looking round that crowded church, my mind went to the Whitsuntide hymn: "Blessed art thou, O Christ our God, who hast made the fishermen wise by the sending down upon them of the Holy Spirit, and through them hast drawn the world into thy net."

The sermon ended, the singers took up the solemn chant of the Hymn of the Cherubim, and a hush fell upon the congregation as the ministers with their attendants emerged from the prothesis chapel and made their slow circuit of the church, the veiled oblations borne aloft, to the accompaniment of that all-embracing appeal: [533]

> May the Lord God be mindful of us all
> in His kingdom, always, now and for ever,
> and unto the ages of ages.

The holy gifts were carried up within the sanctuary and laid upon the altar. The singers resumed their interrupted hymn; the atmosphere was heavy with incense—which, say the commentators, is here an emblem of the mixture of myrrh and aloes which Nicodemus brought for the entombment of the Lord: [782]

> Lo, Christ is crucified, the Life is buried,
> the tomb is made fast, the stone is sealed.

Two shallow alms-baskets piled high with tattered notes were passed slowly round the church, while the sacristan sprinkled perfume from a pewter vessel into the outstretched hands of the more accessible among the male members of the congregation. [794]

The long drawn-out alleluias died away into silence as the parish [788]

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796 788 priest resumed his place before the doors and took up anew the litanies which properly pertain to the deacon's liturgy:

> For the precious gifts which have been offered,
> For this holy temple, and for those who enter it in
> faith, reverence and the fear of God . . .

while the reiterated *Kyrie eleison* of the singers rose and fell and we commended "ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God".

At the cry: "The doors, the doors!" all became suddenly alert, and a young girl—one of those celebrating their name-day—pushed through the crowd of women and children who filled the space between the lectern of the singers and the eikonostasis on the north side of the church and, standing before the eikon of the Mother of God, read the Nicene Creed. The Bishop commenced the great eucharistic prayer and the climax of the liturgy drew near. After the loaves that remained over from 796 778 262 783 the consecrated bread had been blessed, the Bishop sent me, by the hand of his assistant, a portion bearing the seal IC . XC . NI . KA: how many a holy custom have we forfeited in exchanging the *artos* of scripture and primitive tradition for the *azymes* which bear no evident relation to the common bread which one bakes and breaks at home, or to the daily toil of ordinary men and women. In Greece the bread and the wine [793] that are brought to the altar are the very same as those which are eaten and drunk at home, and such loaves as remain over after the distribution of the blessed bread—the *antidoron* (literally, 'instead of the gift')—go to the parish priest; so, we may recall, the English Prayer Book requires that: "the Bread be such as is usual to be eaten. . . . And if any of the Bread and Wine remain unconsecrated the Curate shall have it to his own use."

Came the solemn pronouncement of the Lord's words: "This is my body. . . . This is my blood", and the great cry "Thine of thine own we offer to thee . . ." and then the Bishop knelt before the holy table and called upon God to "send down thy Holy Spirit upon us and upon these thy gifts, and make this bread the precious body of thy Christ, and that which is in this cup the precious blood of thy Christ, changing them by thy Holy Spirit", while the singers softly intoned their hymn of adoring praise, and the holy people of God stood with bowed heads in the pools of sunlight, veiled by the slowly spiralling haze of incense.

796 788 178 In some parts of Greece where movements such as the Brotherhood

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of Life have been most active, there have, as we shall see in a later chapter, been certain changes in liturgical practice during recent years: very often now the celebrant reads in an audible voice the whole of the *anaphora*, or great eucharistic prayer, which the rubric directs him to say *mystikos*—mystically, or secretly—and the whole congregation kneels at the invocation of the Holy Spirit. None of these influences had as yet reached this remote corner of New Greece, however, and the liturgy was still celebrated at Dasoto after the fashion which caused Robert de Dreux, in the seventeenth century, to observe that "it is not easy to see all that they do when they say mass, because the celebrant is hidden by a screen which shuts off the altar, and only shows himself three or four times". This, however, is a topic to which we shall have occasion to return.

The Lord's Prayer (like the Creed) was recited by a girl, and there were some thirty communicants including several children borne in the arms of their mothers—a familiar sight this in every Greek parish church. When the liturgy was ended, and the Bishop had distributed the blessed bread to the whole congregation, I observed some twenty of those who had communicated kneel before the royal doors while their father in God read a brief prayer of absolution. I have referred elsewhere to contemporary Greek practice in regard to the use of the mystery of confession. In the country districts at least, where confessors are rare, this is by no means as uniform as some are apt to suppose, or as might be inferred from the customs which obtain among the Russians of the diaspora, in Paris and elsewhere, with whom the sacrament has tended in recent times to become an obligatory part of the preparation for holy communion.

When one has fasted as a Christian one feasts as a Christian—in Greece at least.

Then for their Festivals [says Dr. Covel] . . . there is not one that appears there but will contribute something, as his share, towards the providing of victuals and drink in abundance, (as at our old Whitsun-Ales, or setting up May-poles and the like in England) there is hardly one Greek so poor, but he will borrow, or pawn, or sell his very Cloaths, or something else, to get Money for Wine, to Celebrate the Festival; and it is the same Practice amongst them upon the Holydays set apart for the Virgin Mary, or any other

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VI

HEAVEN UPON EARTH

> Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church that he is entering into another heaven. That same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in His church, and on this account the Christian must needs enter with reverence and fear.
>
> From a *Synopsis* printed at Venice in 1857

DR. COVEL, it must be confessed, looked with a somewhat jaundiced eye upon the liturgical performances of the Greeks of Constantinople—the "jolly Easterlings," as he styles them. Not for him the wondering awe of the emissaries of the Prince of Kiev who, seven centuries before his advent as chaplain to King Charles' ambassador at the Sublime Porte, had been present at a celebration of the divine liturgy of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, in the great church of the Emperor Justinian, and had not known whether they were yet on earth or in heaven by reason of its surpassing splendour.

"A miserable Jumble, or patcht Piece of Service", says Covel, "so confused and so tedious, as it takes away all Devotion"; not to be compared with the chaste dignity of that incomparable liturgy whose compilers "with wonderful Prudence and sound Judgment did distinguish, or rather . . . garble the Offices of Greeks and Latins: and retaining and adding only such things as might promote true Piety and primitive Devotion, did cast away all the rest."

The good Doctor was plainly subject to the prejudices which are characteristic of most Frankish divines and travellers of his generation; and yet, making due allowance for a certain lack of sympathy in the face of an unfamiliar liturgical tradition, we must admit the substantial truth of his assertion that "the greatest part of the Easterlings' Oeconomy and discipline, especially of the Greeks, consist first in their Pomp and amusing Ceremonies at their Liturgies and other Offices . . . and in celebrating their Fasts and Feasts."

Nobody who has lived and worshipped amongst Greek Christians for any length of time but has sensed in some measure the extraordinary hold which the recurring cycle of the Church's liturgy has upon the piety of the common people. Nobody who has kept the great lent with

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788 796 the Greek Church, who has shared in the fast which lies heavy upon the whole nation for forty days; who had stood for long hours, one of an innumerable multitude who crowd the tiny Byzantine churches of Athens and overflow into the streets, while the familiar pattern of God's saving economy towards man is re-presented in psalm and prophecy, in lections from the Gospel, and the matchless poetry of the canons; who has known the desolation of the holy and great Friday, when every bell in Greece tolls its lament and the body of the Saviour lies shrouded in flowers in all the village churches throughout the land; who has been present at the kindling of the new fire and tasted of the joy of a world released from the bondage of sin and death—none can have lived through all this and not have realised that for the Greek Christian the Gospel is inseparably linked with the liturgy that is unfolded week by week in his parish church. Not among the Greeks only but throughout Orthodox Christendom the liturgy has remained at the very heart of the Church's life.

What the west knows as the liturgical movement bears witness to a very different state of affairs. Throughout western Christendom we can trace the growth of a spirit profoundly alien to that which characterises the Orthodox Christian's approach to the mysteries of the faith. The prayer of the Church no longer shapes and controls the piety of ordinary men and women as it did in former days. Liturgy has as it were become separated from dogma and then, inevitably, from spirituality also. The holy eucharist—the corporate action wherein every member of the organic body has its appropriate *liturgy* to perform—has become clericalised; has come to be thought of as the act of one member acting on behalf of the whole body.

Many who reverence the Bible as the word of God forget that the treasures of the divine scriptures are fully revealed only to the worshipping *ekklesia*, in whose liturgy they are embedded as in a precious frame. Every fragment of a shattered Christendom has its private *lex orandi*, born of isolation and bearing the marks of controversies which are in their turn the legacy of schism and partial vision; while personal devotion—no longer fully subject to the control of the liturgy—has brought forth strange fruit; and a theology divorced from worship and banished to the schools has come to be regarded as a barren science of the intellect: a necessary discipline for scholars and specialists, but utterly irrelevant to the life of the ordinary Christian doing daily battle against the threefold enemy.

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The liturgical movement in the west is nothing less than a reassertion of the true nature of the liturgy and of its place in the life of the Church, springing from a recovered vision of the nature of the Christian mystery, and from the realisation that dogma and scripture can never be isolated from the living liturgical tradition of the worshipping community without serious impoverishment and distortion. Its scope embraces a far wider field than the province of the liturgiologist, and though it is commonly associated with such 'ecclesiastical' matters as the purifying of the traditional chant and the reform of ceremonial, it is ultimately concerned with fundamental theological realities. Herein lies the secret of the widespread influence of the movement—an influence which although it has been most profound within the bounds of the Roman communion has yet extended in some measure to German Lutherans, French and Scottish Calvinists and others scarcely less remote from Old Rome. The movement is inextricably bound up with the return, now manifest in many different quarters, to a truly theological approach to biblical exegesis, and a recovered awareness that the ancient fathers are not so dead as some would have them be.

Dom Olivier Rousseau (whose *Histoire du Mouvement liturgique* affords an admirable survey of the origins and later development of the movement throughout western Christendom) has justly observed that so far as the Orthodox Church is concerned there can be no question of a liturgical movement, for her piety has never deviated from her worship.

I have already had occasion to refer to certain reforming tendencies which are exercising a growing influence upon the liturgical life of the Greek Church at the present time. Father Eusebius Matthopoulos never wearied of expounding the significance of the divine liturgy to the multitudes who flocked to hear him in every city of Old Greece, and one of the primary aims of the Brotherhood which this great preacher and evangelist founded at the beginning of the present century has always been the reverent celebration of the holy mysteries. One has but to compare the manner in which the holy eucharist is celebrated at the Metropolis in Athens, or the little chapel dedicated to St. Catherine above the outer harbour at the Piraeus, with the use which still obtains in the average Macedonian village church, to realise something of the progress that has been made within a generation.

While, however, one may in a certain sense speak of a liturgical movement within the Greek Church to-day, it is important to recognise how restricted is its scope when compared with recent developments

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in western Christendom. The very limitations of this Greek 'liturgical movement' illustrate the Roman Catholic historian's contention that the Orthodox Church has never lost her hold upon certain important truths which we in the west are only now, after long centuries of neglect, beginning to recover and make our own.

The word *leitourgia* had in classical Greek the meaning of a public service or duty—it might be building a wall or fitting out a hollow ship for a naval expedition. Despite the specifically religious associations which the word has acquired through later usage, it is still sometimes employed in this quite general sense. I remember, for example, being told on one occasion in a small provincial town of northern Greece that the municipal school was not *liturgising* that morning: was not performing its liturgy, or service.

For the Christian, likewise, the liturgy which he fulfils every Sunday in his parish church is a public service; an action performed on behalf not of any terrestrial *polis* but of that city which, as Augustine puts it, is Christ's body of which Christ is the head. The holy eucharist in particular, the service to which the Greek Christian commonly refers as 'the divine liturgy', and upon which the whole of the liturgy, in the wider sense of that word, centres, is supremely the characteristic act of the Church: a corporate action in which every member of the one body takes part. Nor is it those now on earth who alone participate in the eucharistic liturgy. It is not merely the bishop, priest, deacon and reader who, with the remainder of the *laos*—the holy people of God—have their peculiar service to offer within the setting of the one oblation. The saints and the angels, the many-eyed cherubim and the six-winged seraphim, no less than the earthly ministers of Christ's body have each their several liturgy to perform; the whole company of the heavenly Sion is present and active in every village church or hilltop chapel where the holy and ineffable mysteries are fulfilled and where the King of kings and Lord of lords comes forth to be sacrificed and given for food to the faithful.

For many centuries now, so far as the west is concerned, this aspect of the eucharist as the characteristic action of the whole Christian community has tended to be obscured. The passing of the austere Latin of the ancient liturgies as a language "understanded of the people" and the banishing of theology to the schools gradually brought about the virtual exclusion of the laity from any active participation in the

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celebration of the divine mysteries. The liturgy was no longer thought of as a corporate action in which the whole congregation—the laity no less than the clerks—had an essential part to play. Slowly but surely the mass came to be regarded rather in the light of a marvellous rite, fraught indeed with inexpressible wonder and mystery, performed by the sacred ministers: as something *said* rather than *done*. The common people, capable no longer of entering into the full meaning of the prayer of the Church, came to church to hear the mass and to occupy themselves with 'private' devotions bearing little relation to the action which was taking place within the sanctuary, where the sacred ministers performed their liturgy on behalf of the whole body. The ceremonies which from about the thirteenth century onwards gathered about the elevation of the holy gifts belong to an age which had already acquiesced in the growth of a popular piety no longer effectively subject to the control of the prayer of the Church.

The English Prayer Book attempted to restore to the laity their rightful liturgy. The mass was again sung that the people might hear it and in a language which they could understand. But the reformers themselves were too much subject to mediaeval assumptions: the real roots of the trouble still lay hid. An emphasis on audibility was not enough and congregational worship was not necessarily *corporate* worship. For the common people the new vernacular mass was still something said rather than done; metrical psalms and the congregational hymns which gradually superseded them, had no more organic connexion with the eucharistic action than the older vernacular devotions wherewith our forefathers had occupied themselves while the priest, aloof and apart, performed his mysterious acts at God's board.

The expression 'to hear mass' has no parallel in Greek. The Greek Christian goes to his parish church not so much to *hear* a service as to play his part in a corporate action in which all the different orders of the Church are actively involved. The very arrangement of the church emphasises this fact; the sacred ministers are not, as is now usual in the west, separated from the people by a long quire or chancel. The holy table stands not against the east wall of the apse but clear in the midst of the *altar*, or sanctuary as we should say. The average Greek church, it should also be borne in mind, is by western standards very tiny—even the great basilicas of Salonica are dwarfed by the cathedrals of the gothic north—and since the space which separates the holy table from

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788 796 346 the eikonostasis is commonly no greater than suffices to permit of the prostrations of the celebrant, and, in a parish church, the laity occupy the greater part of the space beneath the dome, and press against the great screen which bears the eikons, many of the congregation are thus within two or three yards of the holy table itself.

But what, the reader may ask, of the eikonostasis? Does not this solid screen, pierced only by three doors, extending right across the whole width of the church, cut off the laity from all effective participation in the action taking place within the sanctuary quite as much as mere physical remoteness? Does it not tend, as has been asserted by Dom Gregory Dix, to force "upon the eastern liturgies the character of two simultaneous services, the one proceeding outside the screen for the people, conducted chiefly by the deacon; the other—the real liturgical action—proceeding inside the screen conducted by the celebrant"?

788 796 346 178 That there is an element of truth in such contentions may be admitted: witness a tendency which is steadily gaining ground in Greece to-day. In many town churches (with the exception of a few provincial cathedrals liturgical reform has as yet made little headway in the country districts), the curtain which could be drawn across the space above the double doors in the centre of the eikonostasis has now fallen into disuse—at any rate so far as the eucharistic liturgy is concerned. The doors themselves are as a rule only about three feet in height, and it has long been customary to draw these curtains (thus screening the sanctuary completely from the view of the people) at two points during the divine liturgy, at both of which there is much coming and going about the holy table; at the placing of the holy gifts upon the altar immediately after the Great Entrance; and again during the communion of the ministers. This custom has now been abandoned in many places. In a few churches the doors themselves have been removed as, for instance, at Aghia Katerini, Piraeus (where the liturgy is celebrated with a reverence and propriety unsurpassed in all Greece), and, I am told, in the chapel of the Oecumenical Patriarchate at Constantinople.

788 796 346 When all is said, however, the effects of the eikonostasis have been grossly exaggerated by western writers, too many of whom have been content to reiterate *ad nauseam* the strictures of their predecessors in the field of controversy: strictures grounded not infrequently upon the most superficial acquaintance with the liturgical practice of eastern Christendom. The divisive properties of the eikonostasis are most marked in a large church when the space before the royal doors normally

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occupied by the laity is railed off and reserved for the singers and distinguished visitors. Such an arrangement, so far as Greece is concerned, will be found only in certain churches of Athens and Salonica. It would, I fancy, be generally acknowledged by all who have worshipped among Greek Christians as well as in the churches of the Latins that as an instrument for creating a sense of separation between ministers and people the eikonostasis of the Easterlings is vastly inferior to the Frankish quire or chancel. An Orthodox priest who has celebrated the liturgy in more than 200 western churches (most of them Anglican) has remarked that he finds himself far more cut off from his congregation in an English parish church—without an eikonostasis of course, but with a long chancel, often having a screen at its *western* end—than in an Orthodox church where the screen is never further away than four feet from the altar.

It needs also to be borne in mind how great a part of the eucharistic action is enacted *outside* the eikonostasis in the midst of the congregation. Thus the deacon, whose normal place is immediately beneath the eikon of the Pantocrator in the dome, acts as a constant link between all the various orders of the church. The bishop's throne, which forms part of the ordinary furnishing of every Greek church—a constant reminder that the parish priest 'liturgises' only as the deputy of the diocesan—also stands outside the screen, on the south side of the space beneath the dome, so that the bishop is often completely surrounded by his flock. At the solemn entries which occur during the course of the divine liturgy —the lesser, with the book of the Gospels, the greater, with the holy gifts veiled and borne aloft—the sacred ministers descend into the body of the church and make a slow circuit of the whole building. Outside the eucharistic liturgy itself, some of the most memorable events of the liturgical year—the great blessing of the waters at Epiphany (the Feast of Lights, as it is popularly known), the solemn kneeling at the second vespers of Whit-Sunday and the adoration of the holy cross on September 14th, as well as many of the profoundly moving ceremonies of Holy Week and Eastertide—are celebrated not within the sanctuary but in the midst of the congregation.

This would naturally be impossible if the Greek church were encumbered with chairs or pews. In fact, the only seating consists of a few stalls, with crutch-like supports for the arms, against the walls of the church. Standing—not kneeling—is, as it has always been, the normal attitude for prayer. At one of the great festivals the people will stand for hours wedged so tightly together that it is impossible even to cross

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oneself. All other considerations apart, such a setting is hardly favourable to the growth of certain individualistic types of piety which flourish amongst the Franks, who worship their Creator in strange and novel ways, each isolated from his fellow and entrenched within the citadel of his own pew.

In Greece there is but one celebration of the liturgy on a Sunday or holy day in any one church. This is a rule which is waived only in cases of extreme necessity and then only when a *parekklesion*, or side-chapel, is available so that it is not necessary to use the same altar twice (most Greek churches have only one altar). A priest may celebrate only once on any given day.

In Greece the times of services are never announced and questions on this score are invariably met with evasive if not actually misleading replies. Services commence earlier in summer than in winter. An hour or two after sunrise the bells will be rung and the priest and a couple of readers will begin to sing the morning offices—*mesonyktikon* (which should, as the name indicates, be read at midnight, as it is in the monastic use), and *orthros*, or lauds, the office of the dawn. Towards the end of the latter service—perhaps an hour or more after the village's first awakening—the bells will be rung a second time. Still the church is comparatively empty. The holy eucharist follows *orthros* without a break about nine o'clock, and by the time that the thrice-holy hymn is sung (when the bells summon the faithful for the third and last time) the congregation will have begun to swell, until, at the great entry with the holy gifts, the greater part of the village will be packed within the walls of the church, the men to the right, the women to the left, the air by this time heavy with incense.

The whole service is invariably sung. What the west knows as a low mass, the 'early service' or 'eight o'clock', dear to so many English churchmen, is unknown to the Greeks. The traditional Byzantine chant is still more or less universal and is always sung without instrumental accompaniment; only in certain urban parishes has it been partially displaced of recent years by that bastard child of strangely-matched parents, the so-called European chant. In its pure form the traditional plainsong can be quite ravishing in its unearthly beauty. Never shall I forget the singing of the monks of Moni Petraki who gather morning by morning in their tiny church, while Athens lies in darkness and before the first tramcar has gone clanging down the tree-lined avenue of the *Basilissa* Sophia towards the outer suburbs.

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"Nowhere, either in Greece or the East," observes the Abbé de St. Michon, "do men sing as loud as we do. It is an usage that we owe to the barbarism of our fathers. The oriental psalmody is sweet, low and without effort." Alas! it is not always so. "Their singing", says Thomas Smith, "is very mean and pitifull, without figure and the relishes of art, and is at best but a kind of harsh Plain-song." "We heard the Greek Vespers", wrote Sir George Wheler in 1675, "worse sung than *Hopkins* Psalms used to be in some of our Country Churches." All too frequently the beauty of the traditional chant has been overlaid by accretions and adornment from alien sources; and its delivery, as the Abbé justly remarks, "with nasal sounds which weary European ears". Much of the "tedious and indiscreet length of liturgies" whereof so many Frankish travellers have complained, is due not to any inner necessity of the rite itself but solely to the elaboration of the chant. The restoration of the oriental plainchant to something of its earlier simplicity and directness has therefore become an imperative need in circles where the holy mysteries are celebrated frequently: one cannot expect the laity to spend the greater part of every morning in church. There are churches in Greece to-day where the liturgy is celebrated with great reverence in an hour and a quarter, even when many of the secret prayers are read aloud.

Concelebration—which has all but disappeared from the west—is still very much a reality in Greece, and is an important factor in enabling the Greek Church to retain the ancient rule of a single eucharist attended by the whole church in each several locality. On a Sunday morning at an important parish church, such as St. Panteleimon, Acharnon (in the suburbs of Athens), one may see five or six priests attended by a deacon concelebrating at the great square altar, often with a bishop (one of the suffragans of the Archbishop, or a provincial metropolitan serving his term of duty as a member of the synod) presiding over the whole assembly. The Greek bishop or priest who finds himself away from his own diocese on the Lord's day does not take his place amongst the laity in the body of the church but joins the other ministers gathered around the holy table and there fulfils his proper liturgy.

Now there are those who, while recognising that the Orthodox Church has in many respects faithfully preserved the liturgical tradition of the first centuries of our era, would yet ask whether the liturgy of the laity has not—within the bounds of the *oikoumene* no less than in the

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788 796 west—been reduced to a mere shadow of its former self. Is not the Greek Christian for all practical purposes a mere passive onlooker at a gorgeous spectacle performed by the resplendent ministers: even though the sacred participants in the divine drama sometimes descend from their apron stage and mingle with the audience?

It must be admitted that the average Greek layman communicates very rarely, often only once or twice a year; outside the immediate sphere of influence of the movements, hardly ever more than four times. This reluctance of the laity to communicate frequently is a phenomenon which has been common to east and west from a very early period—though in the west (among Orthodox of the diaspora as well as amongst western Christians) there has been a widespread return to something more nearly approaching primitive practice. Its causes are complex and, to a great extent, a matter for speculation. One factor which is peculiar to the east is the place which the *antidoron* has come to occupy. It would be an over-simplification to say that the blessed bread which the Greek Christian is accustomed to receive at the end of every liturgy is consciously looked upon as a substitute for the holy communion; nevertheless, the *antidoron* has a deep significance for the Greek layman—more, perhaps, than in other parts of the Orthodox world.

The reluctance to communicate frequently does not, as we can see from the history of certain movements within western Christendom, necessarily spring from carelessness and sloth; often it is due to a sense of unworthiness which is none the less real though it be considered misguided. Even in reforming circles in Greece to-day one discovers great wariness on the part of the clergy in recommending frequent, let alone daily, communion to their people. This is not, it is held, a matter [783] to be undertaken lightly, or without the advice and approval of an experienced confessor; and few priests will permit their penitents to communicate as often as once a month unless they are satisfied that the desire goes hand in hand with a real determination to follow Christ in their daily life. To communicate every Sunday is regarded as an inestimable privilege, but one which is hardly for all men.

[782] [769] [369] Then we must not ignore the part played by the ordinary Christian in the offertory. In the country districts of Greece the housewife who bakes her bread on Saturday will set aside one loaf upon which she has stamped with a wooden seal a traditional design wherein the words "Jesus Christ conquers"—abbreviated to I(HCOY)C . X(PICTO)C . NI . KA—constitute the most prominent feature. Early on Sunday

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morning she will set out for the parish church with her loaf, and arriving whilst the singers are still chanting the morning psalms, and taking it to the door of the chapel where the elements are prepared, she will hand it to the priest together with a vessel of wine, the family diptychs —or lists of relatives and friends, both living and departed, to be commemorated by name at the holy eucharist—and perhaps a flask of oil for the lamps and a few grains of incense. Even in an urban parish church the faithful may purchase a sealed loaf at the counter in the narthex where candles are sold, and send it to the celebrant with their diptychs.

It is frequently asserted that the offering of the people disappeared from the eastern liturgies at an early date. One can only marvel at the number of eminent scholars who have been led astray in this matter through failure to distinguish clearly between the offertory procession of the Roman rite and the offering itself. The procession never found a place in the Byzantine rite, which retained the older practice of presenting the bread and wine informally before the commencement of the eucharistic liturgy. So widely-used a liturgical handbook as the late Dr. Srawley's *Early History of the Liturgy* asserts that "the offerings of the people, which consisted partly of bread and wine, out of which the elements of the eucharist were taken, and partly of alms . . . continued in the west longer than in the east".[1] In actual fact the offering of the people has never disappeared from the Byzantine liturgy and may still be witnessed in any Greek village church on the Lord's day.

But even though it be admitted that the offering of the bread and wine makes the ordinary people something more than mere passive spectators at a gorgeous pageant, it may yet be said that from very early times the rightful liturgy of the laity has in practice been transferred to the choir: the common people hardly open their mouths from one end of the eucharistic liturgy to the other. Now it is true that congregational singing as practised in the west is so rare among the Greeks as to be almost unknown. Only on one of the great festivals of the Church's year will the whole congregation take up the melody of some ancient hymn: the paschal anthem *Christ is risen from the dead*, for example, or the dismissal hymn at the Epiphany. Normally those parts of the liturgy which properly belong to the laity are in fact sung by the *psaltai* or trained singers —and this applies even to the responses to the petitions of the litanies.

[1] 2nd edition, Cambridge, 1949, p. 127. Dom Gregory Dix and Professor Burkitt have already been taken to task on this issue by the Archimandrite Alexis van der Mensbrugghe.

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788 What, on the other hand, is very common is for the laity to repeat,
796 almost inaudibly, the words of the prayers and hymns of the liturgy
533 as they are chanted by the singers. Not only is this practice very widespread among Greek Christians, it is also officially encouraged, while from very early times only the canonically appointed *psaltai* have been allowed to sing aloud in church. Thus, in a modern Greek catechism, the question:

"Does not the whole of the *laos* take part in public worship?"

receives the following answer:

"Yes, it does and should take part; not only by standing reverently and following in spirit what is being done, but also by joining in and softly singing . . . thus to show that it is a lively member of the body of the Church."

In other words, the excellent practice commonly known to the western world as 'praying the mass' is one with which the ordinary
[782] Greek Christian is thoroughly familiar. He has never been accustomed to occupy the long hours that he spends in church with 'private' devotions—indeed the expression would be unintelligible to him. It is not only "pious Russians of the middle classes" who (in the words of John Mason Neale) "feel a repugnance to use any devotions but those of the Church".

It is necessary, moreover, to bear in mind that the separation between the Greek *psaltai* and the whole body of the faithful is much less marked than in western Christendom, with its surpliced choirs. The singers are quite plainly members of the congregation: the spokesmen of the
[292] whole body of the *laos* amongst whom they stand. They normally wear
[369] lay dress; only in an urban parish church will one normally see an *anagnostes*, or reader, wearing a simple black gown. The ordinary singers are indistinguishable from the rest of the people. Indeed, one of the
788 things which commonly strikes the visitor to Greece who finds his way
796 for the first time to a parish church is the unexpectedly prominent (some would say obtrusive) part played by the laity in the church services. Very often long stretches of incomprehensible offices seem to be conducted entirely by laymen; the parish priest only occasionally emerging from the sanctuary, and disappearing as quickly after a brief *ekphonesis*, to leave matters wholly in the hands of two middle-aged gentlemen in double-breasted suits, supported by a nondescript collection of young men and boys.

This, to the western mind, curiously prominent liturgical rôle of the lay-singers has occasioned comment in other ages than our own. On the
[175] feast of St. Thomas of Canterbury in the year of our Lord 1400, King Henry IV rode out to Blackheath at the head of an imposing array, to

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welcome to his dominions the Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus with a following which included several Greek ecclesiastics, both bishops and priests.[1] These unwonted guests remained in London until the end of February following. The Greek services were celebrated daily, many English churchmen being present, and several contemporary accounts of the impression created by these unfamiliar rites have been preserved. More than one chronicler notes with surprise that laymen as well as clerks took an active part in the services which, to quote Adam of Usk, "were joined in as well by soldiers as by priests; for they chanted them without distinction in their native tongue".

One last word in connexion with the liturgy of the laity. A contemporary of King Henry IV relates that the Emperor's chaplains were catechised by certain English churchmen who had been present at the Greeks' services as to whether "the common people and the ignorant in their country did indeed understand the scriptures and the divine words which they recited together with the learned." Is the 'old school-Greek' whereof Covel and others speak, sufficiently understanded of the people?

Let us hear another voice from the fifteenth century: "The Grekis", says John Purvey, "wiche ben nobel men, han al this in ther owne langage. But yet adversaries of trewith seien, wane men rehersen that Grekis . . . han al in ther owne langage, the clerkis of hem speiken grammaticalliche and the puple understondith it not."

It should be remarked that the Orthodox Church has never opposed the translation of the scriptures or the liturgy into new tongues when such translation has been necessary for the furtherance of her missionary and pastoral work. On the contrary, the liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is probably celebrated in more languages than any other of the historic rites of Christendom. I have myself been present at celebrations at which old Slavonic, Greek, English, French and Arabic have all been used during the course of the liturgy, and W. J. Birkbeck mentions a committee he encountered at St. Petersburg in 1889 which was engaged in translating the liturgy for a small tribe in the north-east of Siberia, numbering less than 5,000 souls and whose language contained scarcely

[1] The story of this Byzantine Emperor's fruitless expedition to the west in quest of military aid against the Turk, and of his sojourn in Paris and London—one of the most diverting episodes in fifteenth-century history—is related in some detail in Schlumberger's *Byzance et Croisades* (Paris, 1927), pp. 87-147: "Un Empereur de Byzance à Paris et à Londres."

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more than 200 words in all. Amongst the second and third generations of Orthodox *emigrés* in America to-day English is being widely used as a liturgical language.

This being so, it is reasonable to presume that where an ancient liturgical language is retained (as in Greece, for example) it is still tolerably intelligible to the ordinary people. It may indeed be questioned whether, except for brief epochs of the Church's history, her common prayer has ever been cast in a language wholly familiar to the unlearned. This is not the place to embark upon a description of the present condition of the Greek language: the subject is peculiarly complex and, in certain of its aspects, highly controversial. Suffice it to say that the *katharevousa*, or 'purified' language, which is still, despite many violent assaults, the normal medium of literary expression, differs comparatively little from the formal Greek of the Byzantine writers. The leading articles of a newspaper such as *Kathimerini* (the Greek equivalent of *The Times*) can be read with fair comprehension by an average classical scholar. The *demotiki*, or popular language, on the other hand, has undergone a far greater transformation since the days when the liturgies were composed, so that a comparison of the two forms of Greek will reveal very wide differences both in grammar and vocabulary.

Both *katharevousa* and *demotiki* are current to-day, and an educated Greek will be familiar with either. A Greek bishop, for example, will normally use, within the privacy of his own metropolis and in everyday conversation with his people, a Greek which he would never dream of employing when writing to a fellow *despotes* or to the Holy Synod. Amongst the ordinary people, however, at any rate since the popular language ousted the *katharevousa* from the primary schools, the latter is never used; the average shepherd or grocer would be hard put to it to compose a letter in the sort of Greek that may be heard in the lecture rooms of the national university.

This does not mean, however, that the Greek of the liturgies is more or less incomprehensible to the common people. Far from it. It is often quite startling to find how much of the Psalter, the New Testament and the Church's prayers the Greek peasant has made his own. The fact is that in the ordinary Greek village the children spend so much time in church from earliest infancy onwards that they inevitably become familiar with the language that is used there. By the time they grow up they will commonly know much of the liturgy and the scriptures almost by heart. If anyone should doubt this let him

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consider the family prayers and personal devotions of the Greek laity. These are made up wholly of prayers, psalms and hymns drawn from the liturgy: scarcely ever (save in certain circles influenced by the new movements) do they include vernacular prayers. The *Hiera Synopsis*—the laity's manual of prayers—consists entirely of extracts from the Church's liturgy. The form of evening prayer commonly used in a Greek household is simply a shortened version of the Little Compline which closes the day in every monastery.

The 'liturgical' approach to the Bible has, it must be confessed, certain limitations. If the laity were present at *all* the services of the Church they would indeed acquire a working knowledge of the greater part of the holy scriptures. In practice, however, they will normally hear only those portions of the Old and New Testaments which are read on Sundays and holy days at the eucharistic liturgy and (depending on the regularity of their attendance) at mattins and evensong. Since 'Bible-reading' is little practised outside the new movements (where, indeed, it is universal) this inevitably means that the majority of the Greek laity, being wholly dependent upon the lections which occur in the course of the regular liturgical cycle, are unfamiliar with considerable portions of the Bible, particularly of the Old Testament.

It is, moreover, almost certainly true that the common people understand very imperfectly some of the elaborate 'canons' which recur only once every year (and then generally at mattins when few of the laity are present in church). But, as W. J. Birkbeck remarks not inappositely of the Russian muzhiks of his day: "I myself have heard a great many more quotations (and intelligent quotations too) made from the canons . . . of St. Cosmas and St. John Damascene than I have ever heard from the Norfolk peasantry, amongst whom I have lived all my life, from the Hebrew prophets, which are read, or ought to be read, in all our churches throughout the months of September and October!"

While many a Greek Christian's familiarity with the Bible will extend only to those passages which are read during the course of the liturgy, his *theological* understanding of the scriptures is commonly far deeper than that of the, often better-informed, English churchman. Unlike so many an earnest student of the Bible, he realises—however obscurely—that the divine history is related at every point to what goes on week by week in his parish church: that it is only to those who are baptised into Christ's saving death, who are living in the mystery revealed in the Church, that the full meaning of the scriptures is laid bare.

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Of liturgical reform I have already had occasion to speak. Its primary object is to enable the laity to participate more fully and intelligently in the eucharistic action, through more frequent communion (Father Eusebius was himself in the habit of celebrating daily), and through a greater 'openness' in the manner of celebrating the holy mysteries. In Athens and Salonica many people now follow the services in the little manual of the Archimandrite Seraphim Papakostas—the popularity of which may be judged by the fact that it had reached its fifth edition by 1950. In general, where the new movements have exercised an effective influence, a high standard of liturgical propriety prevails, though it must be confessed that certain musical innovations of recent years have been unfortunate, to say the least.

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All the movements of which I have been speaking have remained quite unofficial in character, though they have always carried out their work with the blessing of the ecclesiastical authorities and under the general supervision of the local bishop. There has of late, however, been a development of a rather different nature, so important as to demand brief consideration. This is what amounts to the refounding of a body known as the 'Apostolic Diaconate of the Church of Greece', which came into being as long ago as 1930. I do not propose to dwell upon its fortunes prior to its virtual reconstitution: suffice it to say that although great potentialities were latent in this organisation from the outset, its actual activity during the first fifteen years of its life was on a very small scale. It is directed by a council of members of the Holy Synod and professors of the theological faculty of the University of Athens under the presidency of the Archbishop, with Professor Basil Vellas as general director.

The aim of this official organisation is to systematise and co-ordinate the many-sided missionary activity now being undertaken throughout the length and breadth of Greece. In addition to its headquarters at Moni Pétraki in Athens it has a local office in every diocese, and is assured of a basis of material resources by a system of annual diocesan contributions.

The possibilities inherent in such a venture are without question very great, and already much has been accomplished. A theological hostel and a school for preachers and confessors have been established at Moni Petraki: the latter promises to be of the greatest service in the

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[186]

degrees, from the Primates and Metropolites down to the lowest Order of Deacons . . . and if we English Churchmen are lookt upon by the Easterlings in this Point, but as Mongrels or half primitive Clergy-men at the best, how odious and abominable must the Calvinists appear to them, when they shall be told . . . that there is no such outward Pomp, or any reverend or decent Garments used in their divine Offices amongst them; their Ministers are not Episcopally ordain'd, and they wear only a common black Cloak and a Coat or Jump.

The Greek Church has never known a vestiarian controversy. The *phelonion*, richly wrought with gold and silver though it be, has never, like the western vestment and the comely surplice, served to kindle polemical ardour. It is evident to all men that the earthly ministers of Christ should be clothed in such apparel as becomes their high calling: to celebrate the divine mysteries in a common black cloak or Calvinistic "jump" would be indecent, a breach of good manners—like going to a formal banquet in one's workaday clothes.

782
788

It is not a little startling to turn from the controversies about vestments and lights and incense which continue to agitate many western Christians, to a church where these things are used quite simply and naturally and without occasioning the slightest comment. The Greek attitude towards the liturgical use of incense does indeed afford a peculiarly striking instance of the dangers awaiting the Frankish controversialist who seeks to bolster up his tottering defences with unwary borrowings from beyond the Adriatic shores. Amongst the Greeks incense is used at every service, from the most elaborate of pontifical liturgies to a simple ceremony such as the blessing of a house. To do otherwise would be thought irreverent: if any custom can claim to be evangelical it is surely this. Did not the Lord God Himself command Moses his servant:

> Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices with pure frankincense: of each shall there be a like weight. And thou shalt make it a perfume, a confection after the art of the apothecary, tempered together, pure and holy. And thou shalt beat some of it very small, and put of it before the testimony in the tabernacle of the congregation where I will meet with thee: it shall be unto you most holy.

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GRAVE AND DIFFERENT GARMENTS

To worship without incense is commonly regarded as one of the innovations of the Catholics. There is a story of an English churchman who was catechised by some Orthodox monks (I fancy that they were Serbs) as to the practice of the *Ecclesia Anglicana*.

"Do you, in your divine worship", they demanded, "invariably offer incense?"

The Englishman confessed that this evangelical custom was not observed at every service within the territories of the Metropolitan of Canterbury.

"Ah!" said the monks, shaking their heads at this irrefutable testimony to the spread of popery: "We knew that you were tainted with Catholicism!"

Let not the western Protestant be dismayed if his refusal to burn incense in his churches is interpreted by the Orthodox not as a sign of his adherence to evangelical tradition but, on the contrary, as a badge of popery. I have always suspected that my Greek friends must find it extraordinarily difficult to enter into the history of the 'ritualistic' controversies of the latter part of the nineteenth century, since the issues at stake are so remote from their own experience. What *can* one make of muddle-headed *barbaroi* who are so perverse as to regard the observance of evangelical customs as evidence of the continuing influence of the Arch-Protestant?

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XVI

EPILOGUE

THE WATERS OF MARAH

Thou only art more excellent than all the forests of cedars; whereon hung the Life of the world, whereon Christ triumphed and through death overcame death for evermore.

AMONGST the miscellaneous papers of Dr. Covel which now repose in the British Museum, there is a letter addressed to the Doctor from "The Coach Office" on December 21st, 1714, by one Humfrey Wanley. Covel—still industriously accumulating "Brick, Stone and Timber" for his book on the state of the Greek Church—had apparently asked this correspondent whether he had ever sounded Arsenius, Metropolitan of Thebais, with whom he had had some association since the latter's arrival in England, about his belief in the matter of transubstantiation.

Mr. Wanley replies, somewhat irritably, to the effect that on the previous Monday he had succeeded in extracting a highly unsatisfactory profession of faith, "craftily worded", from the Metropolitan and his archimandrite. "I told them", he goes on, "I believed it was taken from some book I had heretofore read: They replied it is taken from the Liturgies of Basil and Chrysostome. I told 'em roundly, the Question was not about what Chrysostome or Basil believed, but about what they themselves believed; They answered, They believe as those saints did."

Poor Arsenius! He must have had a trying time of it in this country, what with his constant financial difficulties (rendered all the greater by the necessity of providing for an oddly assorted following that included "Gennadius, a Cypriot and Archimandrite, and Kathegumenos of Alexandria, with four Deacons, an Anagnostes, a Cook and an Interpreter,"—who, says Wanley, "consume all") and his inability to enter into the subtle disputations of the English divines. Nobody seems to have known what to do with these jolly Easterlings; the universities would not be pestered with them and the Bishop of London tried to

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persuade them that they must quickly be gone. "The poor Archbishop", it is related, "cried out like a child when my Lord of London told him he must Depart." Clearly, the Metropolitan of Thebais was no theologian and felt himself quite out of his depth in controversies about the 'grand Dogma'. Nor was it otherwise with the majority of his contemporaries: "From a Native Greek or Easterling", writes Covel, "who never was out of his country, (though he was there a Man of some Dignity) I never could meet with any tolerable reasoning or answer towards the clearing of this point. Many of my acquaintance would avoid any set discourse about these matters, desiring rather to be quiet and not to embarrass themselves about these, φρικτὰ μυστήρια (as they called them) dreadfull or hidden mysteries."

For all his want of book-learning, however, the bishop's instincts were sound. In transcribing Chrysostom and Basil ("a copie . . . badly spelt and badly accented", says Humfrey Wanley) rather than hazarding a personal opinion, he and Gennadius were appealing not to the private views of two theologians, but to the common faith of all Orthodox Christians; Chrysostom and Basil did but bear witness to this common tradition.

From the day when darkness fell upon the empire of Constantine down to our own time, the Greek Christian has held fast with remarkable tenacity to the faith committed to his charge. He has, for the most part, been little capable of expounding this faith—certainly not in a manner likely to carry conviction with the western theologian. Nevertheless, throughout the dark night of Turkish dominion he has continued to cling at any rate to the outward forms of sound doctrine, and to live to the best of his power in the liturgical tradition inherited from an earlier and more creative epoch. This was no time for unprofitable speculation and the subtleties of the vanished schools, but for striving to preserve the royal treasure entrusted to his keeping.

Now, in our own day, the faithfulness with which through long centuries of oppression a host of unremembered parish priests and simple Christians held fast the traditions of the fathers is beginning to bear fruit. The Greek theologian, furnished once more with a scientific equipment not inferior to that of his western colleague, is rediscovering the marvellous riches of the incomparable treasure locked away these many centuries, and entering into his proper heritage. Unlike the Russian theologian of the diaspora—upon whom enforced contact with western ways of thought has already acted as a powerful stimulus—the

/77 cont./ 353
makes his prayer every evening and morning, occupies the eastern 778
corner of the house. The ikon of the Saint is well decorated 776
with the best handwork. In front of the ikon hangs an oil lantern [354]
that burns day and night. The Saint guards the family, the ani- [553]
mals, and blesses the crops. Usually members of the family bear
the name of the Saint.

Once a month the priest visits the home of every farmer and [793]
brings the blessing of the coming month by sprinkling holy water [788]
in all the corners of the house. He passes in front of the ikon [782]
and utters a prayer in the name of the Saint for the safeguard,
prosperity, and health of the family.

Religion for these people is a necessity of life. Without it 771
they cannot live. In every phase of /78/ their lives religion plays 776
an important part as in recreation, farming, traveling or even 182
in fighting they have their respective Saint through whom they
communicate with God.

When Paul entered the temple of the unknown God and 788
preached the known God to the Greeks, he must have forgotten 776
to mention to them the form of worship they should adopt. The
Greeks have accepted the theory of Christianity of one God but
have dressed up this new religion with their old forms of worship.
They have changed the names of ancient gods and given them new
names with the same duty as the old ones. Thus Saint Nicholas
replaced the god of the sea, Poseidon.

Since 1453, which marks the fall of Constantinople to the 175
Turks and the fall of the Byzantine Empire, the Christian people 795
of the Near East have gone through the severest test in Christian
history. The continuous persecution, massacres, deportations,
and all kinds of inhuman methods could not desecrate it. In fact
the Christian faith got stronger and stronger and had become a
bond of uniting the Christians. The same strong ties in this re-
ligion strengthened them to overthrow the bonds of slavery, after
400 years. It /79/ was religion that kept the Greek letters, the [619]
language of the people, and it was their strong belief in the power

really Greek, since they do not conform to the tradition of Greekness.

Religion permeates Greek life, punctuating it with ritual. No Greek, urban or rural, would think of initiating anything important without a religious inauguration. Schools open with the inaugurative *agiasmos*, "making holy"; the foundation stone of every house is laid with *agiasmos*; merchants begin new undertakings with the proper religious inauguration. On Epiphany, the sea is made holy for those who journey on it. In the country, blessed water is carried from the Epiphany Mass to sprinkle on the fields. The Virgin and the Saints are invoked, but not mainly as correctives; their main function is to endow an undertaking with good and success, it is not primarily to prevent or correct. When a loved man, husband, son, brother, father, beloved, goes away with the merchant marine, or in the sponge-fishery, a woman makes a vow to the appropriate saint, to be fulfilled on the safe return. The islands are studded with small chapels which were promised on such occasions. However, priests are called in, and Saints and the Virgin invoked, also, when difficulties arise. Vows are made for the recovery of a loved one; the priest is called when the family has had a run of misfortune, to "make holy" and exorcise the evil. Priests conduct a rain litany to break a drought.

Traditionally, Sunday services are attended regularly by women and children, perhaps less faithfully by the men. Ceremonials, however, draw the entire family. The ritual is not bolstered by strict limits of time or rules of silence. Mass starts in due course, a little early or a little late, not on the dot of an appointed time. Children run in and out between the aisles, and mothers whisper endearments to babies. A woman will break into a dirge during the Good Friday Mass of the Epitaph, mourning the death of Christ, or adressing herself in sympathy to the bereaved Virgin. The Mass before the midnight preceding Easter is tense with expectation; there is great release and spontaneous joy when Christ is announced to be risen, and the "Christ is risen!" with which all are greeted is a true, joyous message, full of the wonder and the reassurance of the renewed miracle; the candles lighted from the sacred light at this time are carried home with true concern for saving the flame from extinction.

Religion is so firmly entrenched and unquestioned that it can be taken with casualness and a lack of self-conscious effort. It is accepted and ever-present like the air. One talks about Masses and preparations for litanies, but not about religion. Religion is not a personal matter, nor is it a guide to conduct. People consult the priest, but in matters of human relations, or, at any rate, relations which are regarded as secular, not because they are assailed by doubts. Young men do not talk about the meaning of Christ in their lives, nor do young girls dream of entering a convent. On the other hand, the Saints and the Virgin often figure in speech: a man singing of his beloved likens her neck to an altar, her arms to church tapers, or he tells her that he worships her like the Virgin.

he worships her like the Virgin. A derisive Dodecanese anti-Mussolini song, composed during Italian occupation, makes casual reference to God and the beloved Virgin of the Island.

HEALTH

The stock phrase for beginning a Greek letter is "We have health and health we wish for you." A frequent form of greeting and good-bye is "Health to you", and this is also said to anyone who sneezes. Anyone wearing a new article of clothing is greeted with the wish that he wear it with health. The question "How are you? Are you well?" asked upon a meeting with someone, are real questions, requiring an answer. Health is good and important, it is desired, but it is not a preoccupation. The wish for health is not a sanction; one of the child care manuals uses this sanction in urging mothers not to let their young children play with the neighbourhood children for fear of contracting infections, but the other urges the mothers not to worry about microbes, since association with others is of primary importance. In general, however, health is not a motivation in nutrition, recreation, or housing. And human relations are definitely more important. It is terrible to send a member of the family to the hospital unless, of course, it is necessary for an operation. Because of this attitude, tuberculosis often spreads through the family, since very often not even the barrier of self-protection will be introduced between the ailing and the well. Added to this is the fear that, if tuberculosis is known to be in the family, it will be hard to get a son-in-law. However, if an operation is required, a woman will go alone from a village to a hospital in Athens. There is no rejection by her family involved here; in addition, the pattern of fortitude is evoked.

In general, people do not go to a doctor unless something is very wrong. They do not go for a general check-up, although the habit of going to maternal and well-baby clinics is gaining ground. If anyone is unwell, home remedies are first resorted to, and probably the wise woman who knows about herbs is called in. The manuals on child care have long sections, covering about a third of the book, on home care and the diagnosis of disease; and they urge the use of traditional remedies: cupping, the use of camomile and other herbs. When a serious illness is recognized, the doctor is called and vows are made to the Virgin or the appropriate Saint; a mother may vow a foot pilgrimage, or 40 daily obeisances over a period of time, or the gilding of the hands of an ikon. Much illness arises from the evil eye or magic spells, and can be counteracted by magical practices.

The tuberculosis division of the UNRRA mission to Greece reports the impression that there was only one half the amount of tubercu-